Anarchism and Political Theory

Contemporary Problems

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Contents

For my parents, Shifra and Ze'ev and in memory of Yosef Gordon (1920–2005)

Abstract

This thesis explores contemporary anarchism, in its re-emergence as a social movement and political theory over the past decade. The methodology used combines participatory research and philosophical argumentation.

The first part, "Explaining Anarchism", argues that it should be addressed primarily as a political culture, with distinct forms of organisation, campaigning and direct action repertoires, and political discourse and ideology. Largely discontinuous with the historical workers' and peasants' anarchist movement, contemporary anarchism has come together in the intersection of radical direct-action movements in the North since the 1960s: feminism, ecology and resistance to nuclear energy and weapons, war and neoliberal globalisation. Anarchist ideological discourse is analysed with attention to key concepts such as "domination" and "prefigurative politics", with attention to the avowedly open-ended, experimental nature of the anarchist project.

The second part, "Anarchist Anxieties", is a set of theoretical interventions in four major topics of controversy in anarchism. Leadership in anarchist politics is addressed through sustained attention to the concept of power, proposing an agenda for equalising access to influence among activists, and an "ethic of solidarity" around the wielding of non-coercive power. Violence is approached through a recipient-based definition of the concept, exploring the limits of any attempt to justify violence and offering observations on violent empowerment, revenge and armed struggle. Technology is subject to a strong anarchist critique, which stresses its inherently social nature, leading to the exploration of Luddism, the disillusioned use of ICTs, and the promotion of lo-tech, sustainable human-nature interfaces as strategical directions for an anarchist politics of technology. Finally, questions of nationalism are approached through the lens of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, addressing anarchist dilemmas around statehood, and exploring approaches to "national conflicts" that link multiple forms of oppression and that employ a direct action approach to peacemaking.

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Masdeu (Barcelona), Centre Autonome (Lausanne), Cecco Rivolta (Firenze), CIA (Amsterdam), Equinox (Manchester) Eurodusnie (Leiden), Forte Prenestino (Roma), Les Naus (Barcelona), Les Tanneries (Dijon), Le Tour (Geneve), Ragman's Lane (Wye Valley) Salon Mazal (Tel Aviv) and Talamh (Lanarkshire).

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Introduction

Stirling, Scotland — July 6 2005 — 4AM. From the temporary "Hori-Zone" eco-village, where anti-G8 activists have been camping for the past week, a mass exodus is in progress. In small groups, thousands of people trek through fields and hills, making their way to the M9 motorway. It is still dark when scores of men in black riot gear emerge out of police vans to surround the eco-village, but most of its inhabitants have already made it to the tarmac — now dragging branches and bricks onto the road or staging mass sitdowns. The intention: to block delegates, staff and workers from arriving at the prestigious Gleneagles hotel, the G8 summit venue. Meanwhile, emerging from within the camp, a remaining five hundred protesters begin pushing their way through one police line after another, on their way to the motorway. Some use a "battering ram" made of large inflated tyre-liners. Others convince lines of riot police to retreat by pelting stones at their large transparent plastic shields. As reinforcements rush to the scene, the celebratory defacement of corporate retail outlets quickly ends in favour of a rush to the motorway. Then news arrives that the railway approach to Gleneagles has been disabled — the tracks raised off the ground with a compressor, tyres set aflame as warning.

Meanwhile on the M9, police remove one group of protesters from the motorway, only to have another group blockade it a few hundred metres down. At that point, all access roads to Gleneagles from the north and southeast are simultaneously blockaded by six affinity groups, targeting the most obvious pressure-points for transport. There is no exit from Perth or Crieff, and American and Japanese delegates are forced to turn back at Kinkell Bridge and Yetts o' Muckhart. Small groups of people, who have been lying low near their targets overnight, now lie on the tarmac linked through metal arm-tubes, or attached to an obstructing vehicle. Tactics developed through two decades of anti-roads protests and resistance to forest clearing are now creating long queues of vehicles around Scotland delaying the start of the meeting of the leaders of the seven most industrialised nations of the world and Russia.

A leaflet distributed earlier that week at the "Make Poverty History" march in Edinburgh, its text reproduced here, explains the blockaders' motivations:

> *Make History: Shut Down the G8*
>
> The G8 have shown time and time again that they are unable to do anything but further the destruction of this world we all share. Can we really believe that the G8 will "Make Poverty History" when their only response is to continue their colonial pillage of Africa through corporate privatisation? Can we expect them to tackle climate change when whether or not it is a serious problem is up for debate, as their own leaked documents show? Marching is only the first step.
>
> More is needed as marches are often ignored: think back to the megamarches against the Iraq war. The G8 need to be given a message they can't ignore. They can't ignore us blocking the roads to their golf course, disrupting their meeting and saying with our bodies what we believe in — a better world. However, we don't need to ask the

> G8 to create a better world. We can start right now, for example, with thousands of people converging together to demonstrate practical solutions to global problems in an eco-village off the road to Gleneagles — based on co-operation and respect for the planet.
>
> *Starting today we can take responsibility for our actions and the world we will inherit tomorrow. We can all make history.*

The G8 blockades represent only the most overt manifestation of a much wider phenomenon. The last decade, this thesis argues, has seen the full-blown resurrection of anarchism, as a recognisable social movement in its own right, with a scale, unity and diversity unseen since the 1930s. Contemporary anarchist politics represents an intriguing site of praxis and articulation. Anarchists are coming to define distinct cultural codes of political interaction and expression, in the broader polity but no less so in their own organising and human relations. The site in which these codes are reproduced, exchanged and undergo mutation and critical reflection is the locus of anarchism as a movement — a context in which many very active political subjects can say the word "we" and understand roughly the same thing — *a collective identity constructed around an affirmed common path of thinking and doing*. Anarchists are also possessed of a rapidly evolving conceptual ensemble for explaining their politics to themselves and to others, one which is nuanced and, in its own way, coherent — while leaving a great deal of room for disagreement and indiscipline. Nonetheless, contemporary anarchism has received very scant academic attention — a handful of papers, one or two anthologies, and several recent, unpublished doctoral dissertations. This establishes the space for a broad, exploratory study of contemporary anarchism — as a movement, culture, ideology and theory — elements which are inseparable.

This introduction begins by briefly spelling out some of the baseline understandings about contemporary anarchism suggested in the thesis, all of which will be elaborated and supported in the coming chapters. The discussion of methodological issues is then initiated, by presenting the relationship between the two research agendas informing the present study — an investigation of anarchism as a movement (with its political culture, history and ideology) and interventions in anarchist political theory. Third, I elaborate the methodological approach by making the case for an integration of engaged, participatory research methods with political theory. I finally review the concrete research stages undertaken, and discuss the issues of reliability, engagement and scholarly distance raised by activist scholarship.

Contemporary Anarchism: A first look

The contemporary anarchist movement is "new" in the key sense that it does not form a continuity with the workers' and peasants' anarchist movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries — which met its demise under European Bolshevism and Fascism and the American Red Scare. Rather, it represents the revival of anarchist politics over the past decade in the *intersection* of several other movements, including radical ecology, feminism, black and indigenous liberation, anti-nuclear movements and, most recently, resistance to neoliberal capitalism and the "global permanent war". Because of its hybrid genealogy, anarchism in the age of globalisation is a very fluid and diverse movement, evolving in a rapidly-shifting landscape of social contention.

The architecture of today's anarchist movement can be described as a decentralised network of communication, coordination and mutual support among autonomous nodes of social strug-

gle. Lacking any one centre or permanent channels of interaction, this architecture has been likened to that of a "rhizome" — the stemless, bulbous root-mass of plants like potato or bamboo — a structure based on principles of connection, heterogeneity, multiplicity and non-linearity (Cleaver 1998, Sheller 2000, Adams 2002a, Chesters 2003, Jeppesen 2004a. The metaphor is borrowed from the discussion of knowledge in Deleuze and Guattari 1987:7–13).

What animates these rhizomatic networks, and infuses them with content, is anarchism as a political culture, a shared orientation towards ways of "doing politics" that is manifest in common forms of organisation (anti-authoritarian, non-hierarchical, consensus-based); in a common repertoire of political expression (direct action, constructing alternatives, community outreach, confrontation); in a common discourse (keywords, narratives, arguments and myths); and in more broadly "cultural" shared features (dress, music, diet).

Implicit in all the cultural codes propelling anarchist activity are the more abstract "political" statements of anarchism. These are also framed explicitly in representative artefacts of the movement's political language, such as the "hallmarks" or "principles of unity" that activist groups employ, which form the basis for an ideological analysis of anarchism. These statements generally emphasise two themes. First, a rejection of "all forms of domination", a phrase encapsulating the manifold social institutions and dynamics – most aspects of modern society, in fact – which anarchists seek to uncover, challenge, erode, perhaps overthrow. It is this generalisation of the target of revolutionary struggle from "state and capital" to "domination" that most distinctly draws contemporary anarchism apart from its earlier generations. Second, we find references to an ethos of "prefigurative politics" whereby liberatory aspirations are to be activated "inwardly" in the movement's everyday praxis. Reflecting the do-it-yourself approach animating anarchists' action repertoires, the ethos of prefigurative politics thus combines both dual power strategies (building grassroots alternatives that are to "hollow out" capitalism), and the stress on realising libertarian and egalitarian social relations within the fold of the movement itself.

What anarchist ideological expression overwhelmingly lacks, on the other hand, are detailed prognostic statements on a desired future society. This does not mean that anarchism is merely destructive, but that its constructive aspects are expected to be articulated in the present-tense experimentation of prefigurative politics – not as an apriori position. This lends anarchism a strongly open-ended dimension, whereby it eschews any notion of a "post-revolutionary resting point". Instead, anarchists have come to transpose their notion of social revolution to the present-tense. Non-hierarchical, anarchic modes of interaction are no longer seen as features on which to model a future society, but rather as an ever-present potential of social interaction here and now – a "revolution in everyday life" (Vaneigem 2001/1967).

While the foregoing points represent the broad consensus at the back of anarchist organising, the movement has also been the site of a great deal of introspective debates, dilemmas and controversies. The most prominent and recalcitrant among these are discussions around "internal hierarchies" or "leadership" in the movement; debates on the definition, justification and effectiveness of violence; on anarchist positions around technology and modernity; and an emerging set of dilemmas around international solidarity and support for the "national liberation" struggles of peoples in the majority world. Whereas the investigation of anarchist political culture and its ideational components is an interpretative task of clarification, the debates and controversies just mentioned call for a more interventionist approach, located in the enterprise of developing anarchist political theory.

Two Agendas

The present thesis, then, is motivated by two linked research agendas:

1. **The study of a particular political culture**
2. **Interventions in a particular genre of political theory**

These take turns in the front seat in each part of the thesis. Beyond the possibilities and challenges of each separate agenda, it is argued that that the two are not only complementary but inseparable. Let me first say something about each.

The first agenda is inquisitive and exploratory, and involves making sense of contemporary anarchism as a political phenomenon. Such an enterprise essentially sets out to provide an analysis of the anarchist movement in its various aspects, suggesting a theoretical working environment in which intelligent connections can be made among its many different manifestations. Key tasks in this respect are a) enriching our analysis of the movement's network architecture, of the networks' constituent nodes, and of the cultural logics that animate them; b) suggesting a reconstruction of the movement's recent genealogy and sources of influence, as well as its relationship with the "historical" anarchist movement; and c) making sense of the way in which anarchists make sense of themselves: mapping the ideological world which anarchists create and reproduce, and the epistemologies that they generate in the course of political engagement. These topics are examined, in turn, in the first three chapters of the thesis.

The second agenda involves a more sustained concern with the topics of anarchist debate and controversy mentioned above. In addressing these, the first task is one of disentangling – differentiating between different aspects of a discussion, identifying patterns whereby speakers tend to argue at cross-purposes, pointing to confused uses of the same concept in different senses, and putting the finger on questions which are the most relevant and meaningfully-debatable ones. From this follows the second task, which is to suggest directions for the reconstruction of certain debates, formulate substantive arguments of my own, and ask whether and how the conclusions can be seen to filter back into anarchism's cultural codes. The five chapters in the second part of the thesis are structured around these efforts, one theme at a time.

Presented in this way, there are two directions in which the relationship among these two agendas can be seen to proceed. One is to view the second agenda as a possible extension of the first one. The interest in anarchism remains driven by exploratory curiosity, but is allowed to spill over into the realm of conceptual argumentation. The anarchist movement, on this reading, is to be recognised as one of the many grassroots settings in which political thinking – indeed, political theorising – takes place. As a result, anarchist debates and controversies on a particular theme are approached with attention to the conceptual tensions and reconfigurations that they express, in order to unlock important processes of political thinking as they unfold in the hypermodern public sphere. Having established an understanding of the cultural logics at work within the contemporary anarchist movement, we may further undertake an exercise in political debate from an anarchist perspective in order to follow how activists' ideas are expressed, transmitted and reformulated through continuous process of discursive exchange.

More broadly, the political culture / political theory nexus suggested here can be seen as a sample of a more broadly proposed corrective to much of the accepted methodological corpus of academic political theory. Such a perspective suggests that political reasoning must take into

account the real conditions of politics, in terms of defining its questions and debates, as well as in terms of integrating questions of practical implementation into its fold. While for mainstream political theory this would mean policy, legislation or constitutional change, the real world with which anarchist reasoning is concerned is that of extra-legal activity for social transformation.

Another possibility, however, sees the second, interventionist or prescriptive agenda, as an end in itself – and thus as perhaps primary to the first one, in terms of the researcher's own interests and of its significance to providing an enriched approach to anarchist politics. On such an approach, the first agenda now takes on an auxiliary role, being viewed as a necessary preliminary to more argumentative thinking. From chapter 4 onwards, then, the reader is invited to provisionally adopt an anarchist frame of assumptions, and see what happens when we "run with it", in application to a number of themes. To be sure, the possibility for any intervention in an explicitly anarchist theoretical debate depends on its grounding in a prior acceptance of some anarchist assumptions. While I present this framework in some elaboration, I do not argue for its validity as such. My purpose in this thesis is not to add anything new to "the case for anarchism", which has already been presented exhaustively in two centuries of anarchist literature, and has received substantial treatment and reinforcement, from different angles, in academic political theory (Wolff 1971, Taylor 1976, Ritter 1980, Taylor 1982, Brown 1993, Carter 2000). My aim in this thesis is different. Instead of taking a universalist foundation to argue for anarchist *conclusions*, I intend to take the discussion to a more advanced level, beginning from some anarchist *assumptions* and opening up debates that only arise from within them. Thus, in the second part, the grounding of argumentation in a previous analysis of political culture allows the elaboration of contemporary themes in anarchist theory to reflect more genuinely the debates, mentalities and language of the anarchist movement, to be found in anarchists' everyday actions and utterances.

The present thesis should thus further be distinguished from previous academic works on anarchism, such as those cited above. While I do not mean to question the validity or rigour of these enterprises as such, the issue I take with them all is that they proceed in complete detachment from the realities of the anarchist movement, resulting in theoretical interventions that have no direct resonance the actual debates in which anarchists engage in the course of their political activity. The explosive growth, and deepening of, discussion in anarchist circles recently, which has been touching on a multitude of issues and espousing original and sophisticated perspectives, has received little if any recognition from academic writers. Alan Ritter quite typically sees the "gist of anarchism" represented in the works of Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin,

> whose contributions to anarchist theory are universally [*sic*] regarded as most seminal. These writers, who succeeded each other within the discretely bounded period between the French and Russian Revolutions, worked out a coherent set of original arguments, which, while continuing to be influential, have not developed much since Kropotkin's time. Hence, to comprehend anarchism as a political theory, the writings of more recent anarchists need not be considered. (Ritter 1980:5)

Such an approach would have been hard to justify even twenty five years ago, when anarcha-feminism and ecological approaches to anarchism were already well developed. Today it would be outrageous, in view of the sheer explosion of anarchist activity and its accompanying reflection, which are readily available for sourcing and discussion if one knows where to look. Still, even in some of the most recent writing, the assumptions and sources for discussion remain either those

of nineteenth and early-twentieth century anarchists (Ward 2005), or stipulative claims which are entirely insensitive to what contemporary anarchists actually think and write (Sheehan 2003). As Jason McQuinn, editor of the most widely-read American anarchist journal argues, “the void in the development of anarchist theory since the rebirth of the milieu in the 1960s has yet to be filled by any adequate new formulation of theory and practice powerful enough to end the impasse and catch the imaginations of the majority of contemporary anarchists in a similar manner to Bakunin’s or Kropotkin’s formulations in the nineteenth century” (McQuinn 2004).

In engaging primarily with contemporary anarchist sources, both written and oral, I therefore attempt a discussion of anarchism that brings the topic up to date, reflecting the very real developments that have been taking place therein over the past years, and approaching perennial anarchist issues through a new perspective.

Between Philosophy and Participatory Research

The recognition of the importance of an activism-grounded approach for “doing” political theory extends beyond the specific interest in anarchism. Writing about environmental political theory, Avner De-Shalit has recently argued for essentially the same type of enterprise. In order to be not only interesting but also relevant, he argues, a political theory should “start with the activists and their dilemmas…It is therefore a theory that reflects the actual philosophical needs of the *activist* seeking to convince by appealing to practical issues”. Although s/he may take side with the broad agenda of environmental activists, “the philosopher should not take the value of the activists’ claims for granted; their intuitions, arguments, claims, and theories should also be scrutinized. However, the fact that they need to be critically examined does not affect the main point: that the activists’ intuitions, claims, and theories ought to be the starting point for a philosophy aimed at policy change”. Procedurally, this means that the theorist “studies the intuitions and theories that exist within the given society and analyses ‘popular’ theories with a view to *refining* them” (De-Shalit 2000:29–31). By bringing the (often conflicting) views of activists to a high level of articulation, the theorist can construct a discussion where the activists’ debates can be undertaken in a more precise and clear way, with attention to detail and a coherent thread of argument. The role of the theorist, on this score, is to partake in and facilitate the reflexive process of theorising among activists, functioning as a clarifier, organiser and articulator of ideas, an activity that takes place *with* and *for* activists. Her or his goal is to address, in theoretical form, the issues that activists face in their everyday organising, to assemble ideas so that they can be discussed carefully, to lay open hidden assumptions and contradictory statements, and in general to advance activists’ thinking by transposing it from the fragmented terrain of brief and informal debate to a dimension where a more structured and “high definition” discussion can be undertaken – to the written page.

While the gist of this approach is very close to the type of theorising activity that I am proposing here, one aspect of it is not sustainable for application to the present context. Clearly anarchist theory is not geared towards underpinning “policy change”, which inevitably means change through the state. Rather, the goal is to underpin various forms of grassroots action that take place outside and as-against the state. This observation does not invalidate De-Shalit’s basic approach, that is, the grounding of theory in the ideas of activists. What it does do, however, is to shift our understanding of what these needs may be. The anarchist theorist’s engagement with the

"popular" argumentation of activists has the goal, not of helping anarchists articulate better arguments that they can use to influence the political process, but to improve their understanding of the issues that guide them in the project of transforming society without recourse to the state.

This aspect of De-Shalit's meta-theory can be criticised along more general lines. In essence he seems to be taking on board, quite uncritically, what I would consider to be some very naïve assumptions about the way in which politics actually functions. The rationale that underlies his account is that the purpose of theory is to equip activists with arguments with which they then enter into a presumably open and free arena of public debate. Here, success in "convincing" other members of the public is, in turn, understood as automatically translating into policy changes. This can only be because this "public" is supposed to have a deciding influence over what the state does. Such an orientation seems to inhabit, along with much of contemporary political theory, some kind of dream-land in which there are no such things as systematic collusion and revolving doors between political and corporate elites, professional lobbyists and millionaire donors, manipulative news channels, and governments which lie to the public about anything from the dangers of GM crops to the existence of weapons of mass-destruction in oil-rich countries. If a political theory really wants to have an impact in the real political world, it should at least take on board some empirical consideration of what that world actually looks like, instead of assuming that the theorist is embedded in a well-functioning democratic polity. This assumption is not very widely shared among De Shalit's own audience of environmental activists.

It could also be asked whether it is really the province of *theory* to convince the public of the appropriateness or viability of a political position, whether anarchism or De-Shalit's democratic and socialist environmentalism. What convinces people much more effectively than theory is *ideological* communication: propaganda, slogans, cartoons and, perhaps more than anything, the living practice of activists which the latter use directly to inspire people by way of example (this is what anarchists call "propaganda by deed"). It may be seriously doubted whether anyone has ever been "won over" to a political position on the strength of a well-constructed argument or appealing theory. It is much more likely – and in fact confirmed by what can be observed among activists – that people come into their positions on the basis of a much more personal process, which takes place not only on an intellectual/theoretical level but also on the basis of emotion, conviction and belief – elements of ideology which need to be taken into account in constructing a "relevant" philosophy that can truly impact social agendas.

A final issue to be taken with De-Shalit's account is more strictly methodological: his highly valuable approach to "doing" political theory does not come with the custommade toolkit that is obviously required for accessing the theories of activists. How is the theorist supposed to *know* what activists are saying? Where does s/he reach to in order to source the "popular" theories, arguments and debates which are supposed to form the basis for discussion? Although he continuously emphasises the need to do so, De-Shalit never actually spells out how. This lacuna has some serious consequences: in the remainder of his book, he mostly disregards the very activists whose theories are so dear to him, and remains largely in the terrain of professional academic sources. There are a great deal of quotations from environmental ethicists, political theorists and other academics, and a very occasional reference to "environmentalists" such as ex-Green figurehead Jonathon Porritt, German Green politician Rudolph Bahro and similar individuals who have either never been, or are no longer, genuine representatives of grassroots environmentalism. The real criterion for inclusion in the debate is not whether an activist's argument is valuable, but whether it appears in a recognised publication.

The present thesis employs a strategy in which the philosopher / researcher more fully participates in the movement being studied and theorised with. It is argued that a participatory strategy provides the most adequate and enriching access to activists' cultural codes of praxis, ideology, theories and debates.

This type of theorising has clear resonances with Antonio Gramsci's idea of the "organic intellectual". According to Gramsci, each social group that comes into existence creates within itself one or more strata of intellectuals that gives it meaning, that helps it bind together and function. These intellectuals can be attached both to the ruling class – as managers, civil servants, clergy, teachers, technicians, lawyers etc. – but may also rise out of the oppositional sections of society. Gramsci maintains that not only should a significant number of "traditional" intellectuals come over to the revolutionary cause (Marx, Lenin and Gramsci himself were examples of this) but also that the working class movement should produce its own organic intellectuals. He goes on to point out that "there is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded" and that everyone, outside their particular activity, "carries on some form of intellectual activity…participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought" (Gramsci 1971/1926).

What is relevant here is not Gramsci's reified notion of social classes, nor his integration of the organic intellectual into an authoritarian-Marxist framework – the "counter-hegemonic" project culminating in the seizure of state power. Rather, what can be stressed here is the embeddedness of the organic intellectual in a particular liberatory milieu towards which s/he remains responsive. Hence the process of generating anarchist theory itself has to be dialogical, in the sense that both the people whose ideas and practices are examined, and the people who are going to be formulating theory on their basis, have to be involved in the process of theorising. Only from this dialogical connectedness can the anarchist theorist draw the confidence to speak. On one statement, the voice of the intellectual should no longer come "from above, but from within" (Gullestad 1999; cf. Jeppesen 2004b).

We may now give this basic impetus further grounding, and concrete tools for application, by appealing to a set of methodological orientations that have been developed primarily for empirical social research but which can be applied, with some modification, to political theory as well. What I have in mind is the emerging tradition of Participatory Action Research or Co-operative Inquiry. These concepts are interchangeable umbrella terms, referring to research strategies where a horizontal approach to the generation of knowledge is adopted. The rigid separation between researcher and researched is dissolved in favour of an approach whereby good research cannot be done *on* people but must be done *with* them. PAR/CI strategies also emphasise the emancipatory potential of the collective generation of knowledge, which not only legitimates but valorises a socially-committed orientation in intellectual endeavours.

PAR/CI integrates diverse emancipatory and grassroots approaches to learning, including contributions of indigenous cultures, communities in the global South, radical pedagogues and philosophers, ecological practitioners and egalitarian, feminist and antiracist social movements (Freire 1970, Feyerabend 1970, Birnbaum 1971, Touraine et.al 1983a, 1983b, Rosaldo 1989). Reason and Bradbury (2001:1) provide a preliminary definition of PAR as "a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes". PAR is thus an overtly "engaged" methodological orientation, grounded in an emancipatory ethos that fosters recognition of grassroots actors' ability to create valuable

knowledge and practice. In keeping with the emphasis of PAR on inquiry as empowerment, specific research methodologies take second place to the emergent processes of collaboration and dialogue which empower, motivate, increase self esteem, and develop solidarity.

One of the antecedents to PAR/CI in the field of sociology is the work of Alain Touraine and his fellow researchers, who studied French anti-nuclear mobilisations and the *Solidarity* movement in Poland (Touraine et.al, 1983a 1983b). Defining his method as "sociological intervention", Touraine explains that the technique involves "opening up" a group in a social movement "so that it can experience, in conditions which one might describe as experimental, the practices of the social group or movement to which it sees itself as belonging". The researcher "start[s] from the position that the behaviour being observed must be considered inseparable from the body of meanings which the actors attribute to that behaviour". On the basis of the comments of invited external interlocutors (i.e., the researchers) in the group's discussions, the activists "embark on a process of self-analysis which is impossible in ordinary circumstances because of the pressure of decisions to be taken and, indeed, the pressure of the organisation itself". The group of activists, in this technique, comes to "analyse its own practices and those of the movement of which it is a part on the basis of the hypotheses introduced by the researches, which may, of course, be accepted or rejected". A hypothesis is judged satisfactory if, accepted by the group, it "increases intelligibility and clarifies relationships between members" and "if the group can use it to return to action, to understand both its own initiatives and the responses of its partners. This return towards social practice we have called permanent sociology" (Touraine et.al 1983a:7).

The role of the academic, then, is not simply that of an expert observer but primarily one of an enabler or facilitator, and the role of the participants is one of co-researcher. However, two differences remain. The first is that in the present thesis, the research is done not with any particular group but is rather situated in the more fluid and transient field of anarchist movement. This is both necessary and appropriate given the networked structures in which anarchist political articulation takes place. A parallel might be drawn here with techniques used in ethnographic research, incorporating what George Marcus calls "multi-sited" ethnography, which "moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space" (Marcus and Fischer 1999:96). Second, in Touraine's model the researcher remains an intervening outsider, whereas this thesis works with a more decidedly participatory agenda wherein the movement is studied not only in interviews and group discussions, but by inhabiting it as a social environment – through close involvement in movement activities and in the reproduction of its cultural codes.

Recently, anthropologist David Graeber has described an approach to anarchist social theory, which has some resonance with the present work (Graeber 2004:5–6). In addition to the initial assumption that "another world is possible", he also thinks that "any anarchist social theory would have to self-consciously reject any trace of vanguardism". What this means is that the role of the anarchist theorist is not to arrive at the "correct strategic analyses and then lead the masses to follow". The point, rather, is to answer the needs of anarchists for theoretical expression on the issues that concern them, and "offer those ideas back, not as prescriptions, but as contributions, possibilities – as gifts" (10–12).

To add a point here, it is unsurprising that the bulk of recognised "anarchist theorists" were first and foremost committed activists, anarchist militants who were deeply involved in the social struggles of the day and whose theorising work was inseparable from their engagement in action. Mikhail Bakunin, who constantly struggled in writing with the moment of spontaneous rebellion,

was himself a permanent fixture in almost every European uprising and insurrection of the mid-nineteenth century (Bakunin 1871, Nettlau 1886–1990, Mendel 1981). Peter Kropotkin who wrote extensively about the possibilities for the practical realisation of anarchist social forms was also a tireless organiser in mutual-aid groups, working with the revolutionary Jura federation and closely involved in the everyday activities of workers' movements in France and England as well as his native Russia (Kropotkin 1988/1899, Woodcock and Avakumovic 1971). Errico Malatesta, who dedicated so many pages to questions of organisation and revolutionary strategy, himself took part in an armed insurrection attempt in Campania, and organised strikes and factory occupations in Milano and Torino (Malatesta 1965, Nettlau 1924, Fabbri 1936). Emma Goldman not only made theoretical contributions to feminism, anti-militarism and direct action but actively campaigned for birth control, set up anti-conscription leagues, and purchased the gun with which Alexander Berkman shot industrialist strike-breaker Henry Clay Frick (Goldman 1970/1931, Shulman 1971, Wexler 1984). Rudolf Rocker, the major theorist of anarcho-syndicalism, helped sweatshop workers organise in London and New York, was a founder of the German *Freie Arbeiter Union* and the first secretary of the International Workers Association, the coordinating body for anarcho-syndicalist unions (Rocker 1956, Grauer 1997). Gustav Landauer, who made significant contributions to the communitarian and spiritual underpinnings of anarchist theory, was repeatedly jailed for civil disobedience and played a major role in the short-lived Munich Workers' Republic where he met his violent death (Lunn 1973). The list goes on and on, encompassing not only what later commentators have constructed as the "cynosure" of the anarchist theoretical firmament but also the bulk of its "bright but lesser lights" – figures such as Emile Armand, Voltarine de-Cleyre, Johann Most, Luigi Galleani, Louise Michel, Ricardo Flores Magon, Gaston Leval, Voline, Diego Abad de Santillan, Sam Dolgoff, Federica Montseny – a rollcall of anarchist activist-theorists.[1] In sum, the anarchist enterprise of theory and study has traditionally retained a close relationship to its authors' activities as militants, with their writings coming in direct response to the unfolding circumstances of anarchist revolutionary efforts.

This type of theorising activity is, I think, part of what makes the anarchist tradition unique, or at least distinct, particularly from orthodox Marxism. To think like a Marxist is, first and foremost, to adopt an ontology and epistemology (dialectical materialism, class analysis), then to read off any political consequences from that basis. To think like an anarchist is, first and foremost, to adopt a certain orientation to doing politics, while acknowledging that a plurality of ontological and epistemological frameworks can fit in with it. This is part of why traditional Marxist theory has trouble addressing the political *per se*, without reducing it to a mere epiphenomenon of systematic social dynamics that operate behind people's backs. This is also why it is equally easy to characterise the "anarchist tradition" as materialist (Bakunin), idealist (Stirner), both, or neither.

Following on from these considerations, we may posit three broad stages of theoretical research that can be offered as a structure for initiating and engaging in a collaborative inquiry into anarchist theory. These remarks assume that an individual activist/philosopher is at work, but they are equally relevant for undertaking the same enterprise in a small group.

The first stage (or initial condition) is that of immersion: in order to have access to the theories and arguments that anarchists employ, and which will become the initial building-blocks for analysis, the philosopher either begins from the position of being native to the anarchist move-

[1] The only major non-activists frequently mentioned in this context are William Godwin, Max Stirner and Leo Tolstoy – none of which ever referred to himself as an anarchist.

ment, or undergoes a process of going native – in any case with the result that s/he is situated seamlessly within its networks and fora. The advantages and pitfalls of such an insiders' position is discussed below.

The second stage is that of absorption: the philosopher continuously participates in actions, meetings and discussions, closely following the process of anarchist political articulation which has by now become a frame of reference with which s/he has a great degree of intimacy. This stage can be expected to be the most protracted one, with a constant influx of ideas into the philosopher's emerging framework, and a continuous process of refining the way in which ideas are positioned and connected in the researcher's own mind. The process can happen initially in an unstructured manner, from the position of observation and non-intervention. However, what can also be expected from this stage is that the philosopher will eventually encounter a number of recalcitrant debates which anarchists continuously return to, thus identifying what are the most valuable and relevant topics of theoretical inquiry. At a more advanced period of this stage, therefore, it can also take the form of the philosopher *initiating* focused discussions on a particular topic among activists — whether in personal dialogue with numerous activists, or at seminars and workshops (at activist gatherings or in the run-up to mass mobilisations, for example). To all of this is added an informed and contextualised discussion of relevant arguments and approaches provided in anarchist and non-anarchist texts.

The third stage is that of integration, which parallels the "writing up" process of the philosophical output. Here, the activist/philosopher takes a step back from the process of absorption, and undertakes their own exercise of arranging the ideas that they have encountered in a more structured manner on the written page. This stage can, in principle, take place when the philosopher feels that s/he has reached a certain point of saturation, when further discussions that s/he observes and participates in are yielding diminishing returns – the arguments and theories are now familiar and rarely is something new heard. In the production of theoretical output, then, there are two major things that the activist/philosopher can do. The first is to give elaborate articulation to points that are judged to enjoy broad consensus in anarchist movement, taking ideas and concepts over which there seems to be an intuitive agreement among activists and rendering more complex the way in which they are understood. The philosopher can tease out the way in which concepts are used in general free-form discussion, clarify the sources of agreement over them, and translate this consensus into a more comprehensive account. The consensus can, of course, also be challenged, or the philosopher may discover that it leads to some conclusions that activists have yet to consider.

A second function is to engage with particular areas of contention within anarchism, mapping out the different arguments that are made in their context and spelling out the background of social action against which the controversy occurs. In addressing anarchist debates, then, the first task is one of disentangling – differentiating between different aspects of a discussion, identifying patterns whereby speakers tend to argue at crosspurposes, pointing to confused uses of the same concept in different senses, and putting the finger on *questions* which are the most relevant and meaningfully-debatable ones. From this follows the second task, which is to suggest directions for the reconstruction of certain debates, to formulate substantive arguments of one's own, and to ask whether and how the conclusions can be seen to filter back into anarchism's cultural codes. In such a capacity the theoretical intervention does not necessarily involve taking a position within the debate as it is currently structured – the goal can also be to intervene in the way in

which the debate itself is structured, questioning the assumptions regarding its parameters and what we are having the debate *for*.

Finally, the anarchist philosopher may reach tentative judgements within a certain debate, offering a view that sees some positions as more attractive than others, and making substantative arguments which are then fed back into the ongoing dialogue within the anarchist movement.

Before discussing reliable judgement and scholarly distance in participatory research, let me outline the research process undertaken in this thesis. The strategy has involved five years of embedded research with anarchist activists involved in anticapitalist and anti-war activities, which allowed me to be part of diverse local campaigns and projects, discussion groups, as well as mass mobilizations and actions. In Oxford, I have been situated within the local anarchist network, which has grown through numerous direct action campaigns, from anti-corporate campaigning since 2000 through the mobilisation against the Iraq war in 2003, and whose members developed the local Independent Media Centre and now effectively run the East Oxford Community Centre. On the UK level I have participated in the anti-authoritarian process organising for May Day actions and anti-war demonstrations, and in the Dissent! network resisting the 2005 G8 summit in Scotland. On the European level, I have engaged in participant observation at protest mobilisations in Nice (EU, December 2000), Genoa (G8, July 2001), Brussels (EU, December 2001), Barcelona (EU, March 2002), Oslo (World Bank, June 2002) and Evian (G8, June 2003). I also travelled to several international activist gatherings, including the Strasbourg No Border Camp (July 2002), the Peoples' Global Action (PGA) European Conference in Leiden (September 2002) and the European Social Forum in Firenze (November 2002) and London (November 2004). In addition, I took part in ongoing networking activities as part of Oxford and UK-based campaigns, PGA, the European Social Consulta (ESC) project, and the social forum process. To further trace transnational connections, I have been maintaining contact with anarchist activity in the United States and Canada through continuous email correspondence with activists, monitoring of North American anarchist websites, independent media and discussion e-lists, and meetings with American organisers who regularly arrive in Europe for protests or speaking tours.

I have been constantly following and making notes of the debates that I encountered among activists in all of the groupings and fora mentioned above, as well as monitoring English and Spanish-language email lists and web discussion groups. In the process of doing so, I have encountered what I believe are the key debates that are endemic to contemporary anarchist movements, which are reflected in the selection of chaptertopics in the second part. I have also initiated second-order discussions, that have focused not on collecting primary material but on the developing analysis and arguments in this thesis, whether in personal dialogue with numerous activists, or at workshops I led during gatherings of the UK *Earth First!* network, PGA Europe and the local anarchist milieu in Oxford. These were in the format of 1–2 hour seminars with up to 30 activists, in which feedback was received concerning my developing approach to anarchism as a political culture (a term that some activists seem to have picked up) and anarchist conceptualisations of ideas such as domination and prefigurative politics. To all of this is added an informed and contextualised discussion of relevant arguments and approaches provided in anarchist texts (see below), from books and essays to flyers, brochures, and web-based news and opinion postings. This dissertation, therefore, specifically involves a combination of accumulated understanding gained by first-hand experience and discussions with activists, a critical reading of anarchist and nonanarchist texts, and expository argumentation.

Discussion

One of the inherent challenges of research on anarchism lies in approaching issues of reliability and of valid documents and arguments. The participant approach undertaken here, it is argued, can generate more confidence in the authenticity of the behaviours and utterances observed by the researcher. As Sociologist Maxine Baca Zinn notes, especially with minority cultures or marginalized constituencies, participant research is "less apt to encourage distrust and hostility, and the experience of being excluded…from communities, or of being allowed to "see" only what people…want [the researcher] to see. People in minority communities have developed so many self-protective behaviors form dealing with outsiders, that it is quite reasonable to question whether many real behaviors and meanings are accessible to outsiders…who often lack insight into the nuances of behavior" (Baca Zinn 1979:212)

Slightly more complex is the issue of texts. There is a great deal of anarchist literature out there – in books, pamphlets and on the web. A stroll through the yearly London Anarchist Bookfair uncovers four broad categories:

- Informational books, booklets and pamphlets on contemporary issues and struggles (from the Zapatistas and climate change to squatting and campaigns against GMOs), including recent commentary from Chomsky, Zinn, Said, etc.;
- Older literature – anarchist, Marxist and libertarian-left "classics";
- Underground music CDs and material on cultural alternatives (from punk to drugs to earth-based spirituality);
- Many self-published, photocopied or cheaply-printed booklets and 'zines (pronounced as in "magazines" or "fan-zines"), normally in A5 format. These include a mix of essays, action reports, comics, short stories, poetry, and do-it-yourself guides on anything from women's health to bicycle repair. Almost all pieces in these 'zines are undated, and are written anonymously, collectively or under a pseudonym.

This last class of materials is highly absorbing, since it is the most grassroots expression of the contemporary anarchist movement and thus offers as an intriguing vista into its political culture. But such materials do not lend themselves to straightforward selection – how is one to determine to what degree a text is relevant and influential? Also, a great deal of anarchist articulation takes place on the web, with literally hundreds of web-sites dedicated to news, announcements and polemics from an anarchist perspective available for consideration by the engaged theorist. However, without any pre-set markers, how can the researcher know whether a certain anarchist group, ideological configuration or set of arguments that we encounter on the web is in any way representative or influential? Since anyone with minimal web-publishing skills and access to a server can set up a website and publish whatever they want on it, it is very easy to present a great deal of material in an attractive set-up, that would give the impression of prominence and importance, where in fact the articulation is misleadingly "louder" on the web than it is in reality. This can cause an especially misleading impression regarding the importance of groups who officially identify as anarchosyndicalist. Contrast the impression of clout given by the website of the Industrial Workers of the World (www.iww.org) – historically one of the largest and most

important organs of anarchist unionism – and its U.S. membership of 983 comrades as of June 2004.[2] The participatory approach is crucial when addressing these issues. Without an embedded presence in anarchist networks, the theorist may be led to vastly misguided judgments about the relative importance of various anarchist ideas and tendencies – resulting in an academic account that has little to do with reality. This establishes the importance of the much richer orientation available to the observing participant, who encounters the movement and its culture as a habitus, rather than as an "other" mediated by and limited to the texts it produces.

This is not to say, however, that the participant observer should just be taken on her or his word regarding such judgments on reliability, validity and relevance. There are at least three further ways in which these may be assessed: their mutual consistency, the reader's own interpretation of the cited source-material, and other reports of participatory research undertaken in direct action movement networks (e.g. Plows 1998, Cox 1999, Wall 1999, Eguiarte 1999, Christensen 2001, Chesters and Welsh 2004, Chesters and Welsh 2005, Juris 2004).

A second challenge is that of interpretation. If this were a thesis in mainstream political theory, it would be reasonable to select some questions about which other theorists have already said something, and then pick them apart to make my own points. This would be easy, because a text that is transparent and precise, according to the conventions of discussion within the academic discipline of political theory, also provides rich pickings for criticism, as long as the rules of the Socratic game are observed. Anarchist literature does not, of course, work in the same way. This literature may include rigorous argumentation, but it is always by definition also polemical writing that can be very well-structured but rarely of a philosophical nature. Anarchist essays are written with very particular audiences in mind, often other anarchists. Materials that are intended for the general public tend to be leaflets, posters, videos and other creative media of propaganda, which address issues but rarely anarchism itself.

What is more, though there there are many very insightful, calmly argued and well thought-out essays out there, much of what one encounters in the polemical section of anarchist literature is just not very good. Though not wanting to take the comparison too far, polemical anarchist literature sometimes displays what is, according to sociologist Erik Olin Wright, part of what is "bullshit" about "bullshit Marxism": the lack of careful debate, clarifying one's arguments in a way open to challenge, admitting where there are gaps in one's knowledge and understanding (interviewed in Kirby 2001). Wright reads this lack as the result of deliberate refusal, since he cannot bring himself to admit dogmatism or mere sloppiness on part of the "sophisticated intellectual[s]" who are, presumably, the only ones who still write about Marxism. For some anarchists, however, the sources of this lack within their own literature gravitate between bad faith of the sectarian and vitriolic kind, and "inarticulate ignorance". McQuinn (2003), for example, complains of the evasion of rational discussion in the anarchist milieu, which "seems to be the worst on the web, but often it is nearly as bad elsewhere":

> It usually involves the refusal to reflect, self-critically evaluate and self-edit responses. The more unthinking, belligerent and vociferous participants tend to drive out the more thoughtful and considered opinions by making a never-ending stream of attacks, demands, and frivolous comments…In other anarchist media the evasion of discussion tends to be most obvious in the letters columns of periodicals…and

[2] This information is not disclosed anywhere on the IWW website, but in its annual report to the U.S. Department of Labor. Data retrieved through search form on erds.dol-esa.gov

> in some of the rants that sometimes pass for personal, pointof-view articles. These are also formats that tend to lend themselves to those writers too irresponsible, unprepared and unself-critical to put together more coherent essays that would need to be more thoroughly thought through, more logically structured, and more self-critically examined in light of other perspectives.

McQuinn may be right, but only up to a point. To begin with, as I have said there are many well-constructed and careful arguments in anarchist polemical literature, even if they might not meet academic criteria of rigour. Second, "rants that sometimes pass for personal, point-of-view articles" is a bit condescending, since it does not acknowledge the value of a rant. Their function is not so much to provide a structured argument but to provoke, inspire, and drive through attitudes that are difficult to constrict within rational formulae. Rants may tell the commentator more about what really motivates anarchists and how they see the world around them than any piece of careful argumentation, because they also display emotions and imagination – important constituents of political actors' cognition.

More importantly, however, McQuinn seems to be casting his net of samples much too narrowly. He may or may not be right in complaining about the level of discussion in anarchist print and web-based media, but the lack of rational discussion is far from the norm outside this media – in the oral conversations among anarchists where the bulk of discussion within the movement takes place. These oral discussions, most often in the form of casual and vernacular political conversations among activists, tend to be of a far higher quality than what McQuinn is seeing in anarchist media. They admit less "bullshit" because they are face-to-face dialogues rather than monologues. For this reason, it is extremely important for whoever wants to write about anarchism to be attentive to these oral discussions and follow them in a consistent way, so as to access a great deal of reasoned and useful arguments. Such a position also allows the theorist to witness the real-time vernacular group discussions in which such concerns are expressed, as well as the exposure to the shared narratives, beliefs and practices which are loaded with significance for theory. The attention to oral debate makes place for coping with issues of explanation and narrative building within social movements which escape other modes of validity (cf. Altheide and Johnson 1994).

This is also relevant to studying anarchism as an ideology. While it is always true that "ideology-producing groups will reflect the impact of articulate and representative individuals, who may be the effective channels that give expression to more widely held beliefs [and who] may offer an excellent illustration of a particular ideological position", contemporary anarchism is too "young" to have yielded any obvious representatives of this kind. Thus the importance of research embedded in the movement's vernacular discourse Furthermore, such individual's "articulated thoughts are meaningless without an understanding of the conceptual and ideational environments which fashion them. We have to bear in mind, all the while, the relationships between those representatives and their social and cultural surrounds…the investigation of ideologies ought to examine mass, or at least large-scale, social thinking" (Freeden 1996:106).

The third and perhaps most important set of challenges raised by the ethnographic nature of participant research is the personal position of the researcher in relation to the field of study. As Hume and Mulcock point out, participant observation requires researchers to use their social selves as their primary research tool, in order to experience and understand the "insider's" point of view. On the other hand, ethnography also calls for maintaining the type of intellectual dis-

tance that can ensure that researchers maintain their ability for critical analysis. "This means that they should be willing, and able, to take a step back from the relationships they form with the people they encounter in the field for long enough to identify and reflect upon some of the taken-for-granted rules and expectations of the social world they are studying" (Hume and Mulcock 2004:xi).

Though the more frequent concern in this context is the researcher's *outsider*'s bias – primarily in her or his capacity as a member of ex- (or not-so-ex) colonialist western countries – in the present case the obverse concern is the salient one. How does the researcher who is an *insider* maintain sufficient distance from the object of research, and does not lose her or his critical faculty having "gone native" in the field (or having been a native to begin with)? While such a situation is relatively rare in ethnography, it has received some attention that can be brought to bear here.

In his ethnography of Croatian immigrants in Australia, Val Colic-Peisker – himself a recently-arrived Australian Croat – was clearly in an insider's position. His research could thus draw on pre-existing networks and contacts, and on the shared language and cultural background that he and his respondents had. As a result, the process of research was, in part, inevitably autobiographical. A very similar situation obtains in the present study. My presence in anarchist circles over the course of the research was primarily as an activist, and existing / developing contacts within movement networks were an important contribution to my ability to access other activists' practices and ideas. This raises the question of whether, and to what degree, the researcher is supposed to bring her or his own self and experiences to the process of formulating interpretative judgments. Peisker's resolution was to "acknowledge and explore my 'positionality' throughout the research process. In this way my own experience became a valuable heuristic tool, a source of theoretical sensitivity rather than a source of bias…Using our holistic selves in ethnography is not only a rewarding social experience but, fortunately, is increasingly acknowledged among social researchers as a legitimate scholarly approach" (91–2).

Such a position has also informed my own research. Through full participation in movement activities as an insider, I was forced to ponder over interpretative questions and substantive political controversies not only in reference to the behaviours and utterances of other activists, but also with reference to *my own* reflections, emotions and behaviors. Thus personal experiences and my inner life inevitably fed into the discussion, exemplified in ongoing concerns around the way in which I was wielding power in activist circles; in my experiences of post-traumatic stress in the wake of violence in Genoa; and perhaps most strongly in connection to the situation in Israel/Palestine. Far from erasing my critical faculties, however, this personal involvement imbued the critical process with a far more intense and powerful dimension – since by default it had to involve a component of *self*-criticism. The theoretical issues I was dealing with had to be confronted, not only for the sake of detached understanding, but also in pursuit of personal and political growth. Precisely because of this personal stake, engaging in an honest and critical discussion became a matter of direct self interest. Only by constantly pushing myself to question my assumptions and interpretations, and to avoid easy or seemingly-comfortable answers, could I generate within myself the kind of clear thinking that would address, or at least make better sense of, the very personal dilemmas and anxieties created by the issues I was discussing.

This relates to a more specific concern confronting the researcher: his political identification with the ideas of the social movement being investigated. Touraine writes:

> On the one hand, if he adopts the attitude of a remote and objective observer, he cannot reach the very thing which he seeks to understand: the coldness of objectivity will hold him back from the heat of the social movement. Conversely, if he identifies with the actors' struggle, he ceases to be an analyst and becomes nothing more than a doctrinaire ideologist; in this case, is role becomes entirely negative. The method's response to this difficulty is to say that the researcher must identify not with the actors' struggle in itself, but with *the highest possible meaning of this struggle, which is nothing other than the social movement: the element in a struggle which challenges the general orientations of a society and of the social systems for controlling the use of the main resources, cultural and in particular economic.* In this way the researcher is neither external to the group, nor identified with it; it is through him that the group will attempt to isolate, amongst the various meanings of its action, the one which challenges the central core of the society (Touraine 1983a:8, *my emphasis*).

Surely, however, the actively endorsed "highest possible meaning" of a given struggle is nothing else than an *ideology*. Touraine is using laundered language to say that he is a pro-democracy socialist, just like the members of *Solidarity*. He expresses his affinity with an interpretation of the struggle, which he is also satisfied that the participants share. A struggle which "challenges the general orientations of a society" etc. – this is an ideological statement if there ever was one. Another weakness here is that, if identification with the particular struggle is not allowed, then valid research is excluded for no good reason – say, a graduate student conducting research with fellow non-unionised staff and teaching assistants, during a strike in her own university. Finally, inasmuch as Touraine's resolution is taken for what it is – an admittance of the ultimately-ideological position of the researcher with a social conscience, then the present thesis follows it. The research is geared to Touraine's ends by definition, since anarchism is a consciously multi-issue movement, where the participants are constantly reflecting on the "highest possible meaning" of their actions (in terms of systemic change which are at least as strong as what Touraine has in mind).

It should be clarified, however, that such ideological identification with a movement does not in any necessary way handicap the observer's faculties. Otherwise no liberal could study real-life liberal politics. The researcher's interpretations of a movement's cultural codes and vocabulary should not need to suffer from the fact that s/he also thinks that "another world is possible". On the contrary: it provides an impetus to resist the temptation to present inaccurate findings in order to portray one's own community in a positive light. This is because the most valuable "contribution" to a movement would be to point out practices and constructions of meaning of which the participants may not be aware, or which they are not keen to confront. Moreover, the substantive argumentation in the second part of the thesis includes both agreement and disagreement with various anarchists' statements on different topics – it is precisely through the immanent critique of anarchist writing that further theoretical insight could be gained. For these reasons, I can strongly relate to the following statement from ethnographer Nancy Ramsey Tosh, a Pagan Wicca who investigated that community:

> I reject the dichotomy of insider-outsider. I, along with other researchers, claim to work as neither and insider nor an outsider but as both simultaneously. Rather than viewing these roles as separate and distinct I see them as two ends of a continuum.

> In this theoretical stance, the role of insider or outsider is a matter of degree, not of kind. By residing in both worlds of insider and outsider, I can look at the world from the inside out and from the outside in. Insider status provides me with the insights missed by outsiders, but I must also step outside in order to explore objectively the meaning of who I am and what I study (Ramsey Tosh 2001:212)

Thus the present project, which bridges between insider's ethnography and philosophical argumentation, makes room for a self-aware, "serious partiality" (Clifford 1986:7) which can engage with the field in a critical and disillusioned manner precisely because of the motivation to contribute to the self-awareness and reflexivity of oneself and one's fellow activists.

Some final remarks on the integration of material and production of academic output. This final stage is where the relationship between the activist-theorist and the broader academic field comes into play. If theoretical methods driven by political commitment and guided by a theory of practice largely break down the distinction between researcher and activist during the research process, the same cannot be said for the moment of integration, when one has to confront vastly different systems of standards, awards, selection, and stylistic criteria (Routledge 1996, Fuller and Kinchin 2004). However, as far as the output of a research project is concerned, there is no reason why the formulations that an activist-theorist arrives at, during and after the process of engaged research, cannot also be presented in high-quality writing. By providing critically engaged and theoretically informed analyses generated through collective practice, this thesis aims to provide tools for the ongoing reflection of social movement participants, while remaining interesting and relevant to a broader academic audience.

Part I. Explaining Anarchism

Chapter 1: What Moves the Movement?

Anarchism as a Political Culture

> What is anarchism? What does it mean to be an anarchist? Why? Because it is not a definition that can be made once and for all, put in a safe and considered a patrimony to be tapped little by little…Anarchism is not a concept that can be locked up in a word like a gravestone. It is not a political theory. It is a way of conceiving life, and life, young or old as we may be, old people or children, is not something definitive: it is a stake we must play day after day.
>
> — Alfredo Bonanno, *The Anarchist Tension* (Catania, 1996)

This chapter suggests a fresh approach to the perennial question "What is anarchism?". While the term is often taken from the outset to refer to a political philosophy or theory — the question, as a result, being understood to mean "what does anarchism *stand* for?" — the present discussion begins by asking more fundamentally what *type of thing* anarchism is. The interpretation proposed here addresses anarchism first and foremost as a *political culture* at work in social movement networks. This designation, it is argued, can offer a "thick" interpretative framework in which anarchist praxis and thinking make sense. The advantages of such a framework is that it a) pays close attention to the life-world of the participants who generate anarchism as a political phenomenon, b) may overcome many participants' reluctance to use "anarchism" self-referentially, and c) can supply insights that the participants might not necessarily recognise or that would challenge their established point of view.

The present discussion, then, serves to establish a structural backdrop against which the rest of the thesis is to be contextualised. I begin by reflecting on the limitations of conceptions of anarchism that restrict it either to the horizons of political theory or to the applicability of historical antecedents — relating both perspectives to the anxieties among activists regarding the anarchist appellation itself. I then offer an alternative point of departure for investigation in examining anarchism from an empirical standpoint. Drawing on recent literature in social movement research, I engage in a set of approximations that seek to expose the nature of the contemporary anarchist movement. Here, I travel from an understanding of the movement's network architecture, through an appreciation of the cultural behaviour that enables the reproduction of this network, and finally to a broader account of the political culture that animates the movement (including its ideational elements). I then analyse the antagonistic process of identity formation whereby anarchists consciously draw boundaries that differentiate their own core networks from the broader milieu of movements confronting neoliberal globalisation. Finally, I examine how the proposed categorical shift towards political culture clarifies the lingering divisions between "old-school" and "new-school" anarchist groups.

The A-word

Before approaching anarchism as a political culture, it is worth examining the limitations of alternative lenses. adequately "representative" account of anarchism without any reference to a constituent group of people. But in introducing the requirement for such reference, another difficulty immediately arises: how should the researcher define and demarcate that constituent group itself? This is particularly difficult with anarchism, given the widespread reluctance among political activists today to apply the word self-referentially. For although *something* that can only be called anarchism is very obviously present in the direct actions, protests, community campaigns and discourses of certain activist groups — the people whom I'd *like* to call anarchists in this thesis — many of them *do not* normally call themselves anarchists, and some actively shun the label.

There are some very obvious reasons why many of the activists I have in mind are reluctant to call themselves anarchists, even though they might be attracted to the word. As Bob Black has put it, "to call yourself an anarchist is to invite identification with an unpredictable array of associations, an ensemble which is unlikely to mean the same thing to any two people, including any two anarchists. (The most predictable is the least accurate: the bomb-thrower. But anarchists have thrown bombs and some still do)" (Black 1994:31). To begin with, then, there is the word's active vilification: for many people the word anarchism still evokes entirely negative images of chaos, mindless violence and destruction, not least so since libertarian ideas continue to be actively demonised through the "anarchist scares" in the corporate media (Sullivan 2004, O'Connor 2001). As a result, representing anything under the banner "anarchism" tends to close people off to what activists are saying. Thus for activists who want to engage with the general public the word becomes a liability — essentially a matter of bad PR. A further point is that an explicit reference to anarchism might be seen as exclusive, one which does not admit many of the individuals and movements that activists cooperate with and with whom they have solidarity, such as peasant and indigenous movements from Asia and Latin America, who have never made reference to anarchism or to any other set of ideas rooted in a western historical experience. Finally, many activists do not want to call themselves anarchists because they don't want to adopt any label *at all.* They identify with very many political and cultural threads, but believe that circumscribing their beliefs under any one "ism" is unnecessarily constricting and implies (however unjustly) that they have a fixed and dogmatic set of beliefs. In the words of one activist,

> Personally I am not down with any titles, tags, or designations. I've spent most of my adult life trying to find ways to do away with genres and borders and envelopes, so I think we are always better off if we don't label ourselves or allow anyone to label us. Anarchy or anarchism is really something we seek and live and struggle for, so it doesn't matter what we call ourselves (or don't) if we are in the midst of action doing it" (Imarisha and Not4Prophet 2004).

This line of expression is related to another reason for resistance to the anarchist self-appellation. As David Graeber points out, "there are some who take anarchist principles of anti-sectarianism and open-endedness so seriously that they are sometimes reluctant to call themselves 'anarchists' for that very reason" (Graeber 2002). The reason here is the expectation that anarchism should be understood as a closely-defined "ideology". As the authors of the popular "An Anarchist FAQ" are at great pains to argue,

> Anarchism is a socio-economic and political theory, but not an ideology. The difference is *very* important. Basically, theory means you have ideas; an ideology means ideas have you. Anarchism is a body of ideas, but they are flexible, in a constant state of evolution and flux, and open to modification in light of new data. As society changes and develops, so does anarchism. An ideology, in contrast, is a set of "fixed" ideas which people believe dogmatically, usually ignoring reality or "changing" it so as to fit with the ideology, which is (by definition) correct. (McKay et.al. 2003 §A)

This popular notion of ideology as dogma is far removed from the approach taken in this thesis. Anarchists too construct reality according to their biases, generating a distinct political epistemology or mode of ideological thinking. Doubtlessly many anarchists do hold some judgements — "government and hierarchy are bad", for example — to be correct by definition. The fear at the back of such statements is the atrocities committed in the name of "revolutionary" ideologies — whether socialist, fascist or fundamentalist — "the destruction of real individuals in the name of a doctrine, a doctrine that usually serves the interest of some ruling elite". But what causes atrocities is not the doctrine itself, but its compulsory application to society through the state. Anarchists, like every other social movement, have an identifiable ideological orientation, however unstable and shifting in response to debate and selfcriticism. However, this is only one aspect of what defines the anarchist movement.

As for theory, it is questionable how far we can say that anarchism "is" a political theory in any privileged sense. Beyond the openness and diversity of perspectives within anarchism (which means it should not expected to be "a" political theory), a more basic issue is whether the way in which anarchist activists actually think and communicate can be described as theory. Writers within the anarchist tradition, classical and contemporary, have also been party to the unquestioned assumption that anarchism is primarily a matter of theory. Thus Kropotkin, in his seminal *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article, defines anarchism as "the name given to a *principle or theory* of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government" (Kropotkin 1910 — emphasis added here and below). Emma Goldman similarly defines it as "The *philosophy* of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man-made law" (Goldman 1917). For Daniel Guerin anarchism is "one of the streams of socialist *thought*, that stream whose main components are concern for liberty and haste toabolish the State" (Guerin 1965). While Noam Chomsky says it is "an *expression of the idea* that the burden of proof is always on those who argue that authority and domination are necessary" (Chomsky 1996).

However, the chief problem with talking about anarchism primarily as a political theory is that, in doing so, we usher in a set of expectations that would attach themselves to any political theory. Under such a regime of expectations, anything qualifying as anarchism would have to consist in a series of claims and arguments, substantiated by logical and/or empirical reasoning, with careful attention to the use of concepts. To be sure, such an account can be provided to the most precise degree. Thus, for John Dunn (2000), a "common version of anarchism" asserts several things:

> firstly, that centralized coercive power can never be justified; secondly, that it is never a precondition for organized social life; thirdly, that it never (or at least seldom) on balance has consequences more desirable than those which would follow from its absence; fourthly, that human beings who belong to a single community

potentially have both the will and the capacity to cooperate with each other to whatever degree such cooperation will be necessary to serve their several (real?) interests; and fifthly, that individual communities in their turn have both the potential will and the potential capacity to cooperate with each other to the same degree.

On the surface there seems to be nothing wrong with this statement — no anarchist would *disagree* with any of the five assertions. The issue, however, is Dunn's presumption that this is a "common version" of anarchism. Common where? Perhaps among the dozen or so professional philosophers who have formulated a version of anarchism that adheres to the disciplinary expectations of academic political theory. But it is hard to imagine a single self-defined anarchist who, in response to an open question about the meaning of anarchism, would annunciate this or any other roll-call of interconnected assertions. What we would hear, rather, is a combination of attitudes, opinions, emotions and outlooks — a piece of narrative rhetoric — which may cohere in the respondent's mind but which does not conform to the expectations we would have from a theory. Bonanno may be too categorical in his statement that anarchism "is not" a political theory — inside a philosophical frame of discourse (such as this thesis) it may well be addressed and developed as political theory. However, if anarchism "is" a political theory, plain and simple, then anarchists can only be activists who endorse something that is recognisably a *theory* in their heads. Since none of them does, we come to the absurd conclusion that no activists are anarchists.

A response could be that, very well, activists may not *independently* think their anarchism in such terms, but it is enough that they will agree with the philosopher's definition once presented to them to make it valid *a-posteriori*. But this still leaves us with two problems. First, although activists may not, as I said, disagree with Dunn's statement or with other putative expositions of "anarchist principles", they may still have good reasons to feel that the statement is too thin. While such a statement may describe a distilled version of activists' *opinions* on authority, cooperation etc., it stillsays nothing about such fundamental things as their praxis or indeed their motivations — about what makes them take political action. It is easy to imagine a person who agrees with Dunn's propositions from the comfort of an armchair; it is much harder to imagine that thousands of people would put themselves in life endangering situations, sit through endless action-planning meetings, and generally dedicate their lives to what often seems an utterly hopeless cause, just on the strength of a principled opinion. Second, falling back on the argument from *a-posteriori* applicability would mean that the entire anarchist movement, if there is such a thing, is suspended between existence and non-existence — an entire clan of Schrödinger's Cats who are-and-are-not anarchists until a philosopher comes along to apply the litmus test of agreement.

A similar thing happens when David Graeber attempts to establish an explicitly "anarchist" label by appealing to historical antecedents. Writing about the presence of anarchism in the movements confronting neoliberal globalisation, he states:

> I am writing as an anarchist; but in a sense, counting how many people involved in the movement actually call themselves "anarchists", and in what contexts, is a bit beside the point The very notion of direct action, with its rejection of a politics which appeals to governments to modify their behaviour, in favour of physical intervention against state power in a form that itself prefigures an alternative — all of this emerges

> directly from the libertarian tradition. Anarchism is the heart of the movement, its soul; the source of most of what's new and hopeful about it.

Here, then, is a second lens through which it is suggested anarchism might be pinned down. Moving away from theory, Graeber elects a historical perspective which links key elements in the *praxis* of the "more radical, direct-action end" of the movement — elements which I think he identifies correctly — to the "libertarian tradition" (clearly a synonym for anarchism, as in "libertarian socialism"). The attempt to generate an understanding of anarchism based praxis is, by itself, superior to a theory-driven definition in that it bases itself on the observable, selfgenerated political behaviour of activists rather than on statements of principle which they do not independently think. However, what enables Graeber to refer to these elements of praxis as "anarchism" is a historical logic — the activists in question are anarchists *because* what they do "emerges directly" from a connected thread of praxis that is labelled anarchism. In other words, guilt by association.

Such an approach remains unsatisfying. To begin with, it is extremely questionable how "direct" the connection is between the activists Graeber refers to and the anarchist movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As I will argue in the next chapter, the relationship between the two in terms of social movement genealogy is in fact very subterranean and roundabout. More fundamentally, there is something suspicious about an act of identification that could be made by an external observer, and which is said to be valid for the purpose of discussion, *whether or not* the human beings who generate the present-day praxis see this connection themselves, or are even aware of a "libertarian tradition" in whatever terms the external observer constructs it. To be sure, there is no escaping an element of external categorisation when using language to impose order on a multitude of phenomena. But the fact that such an imposition is inevitably an act of power, even coercion, requires an anarchist speaking about anarchism to at least mitigate it in some way through an invitation to dialogue towards the people s/he is categorising, an insistence that the object of discussion includes self-conscious and reflective *subjects*.

Hence, a concept of anarchism is needed which the activists who it will be applied to will be prone to *reclaim and embrace self-referentially*. Such a concept needs to meet two basic conditions. First, it must address anarchism in terms that are immediately recognisable to many activists from their own experience, inviting them to endorse "anarchism" as an acceptable title for something with which they already identify. Second, it must explicitly make space for a *lack* of theoretical closure, moving instead to a framework of discussion where ideational flexibility, even ambiguity, come to be seen as necessary and even functionally-positive components. The orientation from which to elaborate such a framework should clearly be empirical rather than conceptual. Assuming that the anarchists that are "out there", whoever they are, are not detached individuals, our attention now turns to the notion of anarchism as referring to some form of social movement.

From Networks to Political Culture

So is there really such a thing as an "anarchist movement" in the present day? In other words, can a framework be constructed to integrate the multiple sites of what we would like to define as anarchist activity into a recognisable whole? Asking such questions is especially urgent since, to

date, there has been not a single attempt to analyse the organisational structures and dynamics of contemporary anarchist movement in its own right. While there exists an extensive literature on social movements in the age of globalisation, very little of it makes any reference to anarchism. Where such reference exists it is invariably couched in terms of discerning "broadly" anarchist resonances in the structures and action repertoires of these movements as a whole, rather than putting the anarchist movement specifically at the centre of analysis (Chesters 2003, Carter and Morland 2004). The task of defining and analysing the anarchist movement as it exists today is, thus, an important avenue for research for which the investigative field remains wide open for intervention.

The lack of attention to the anarchist movement as such stems, perhaps, from three main factors. The first is that we are dealing with a fairly recent phenomenon. It has only been in the recent five years or so that a recognisable anarchist movement has come to wide attention, and it should be expected that analysis would lag behind the development of its own object of investigation. The second reason is that the presence of a large part of the anarchist movement today is submerged, rather than overt. While there do exist a large number of self-defined "anarchist" organisations, the bulk of the anarchist movement operates through informal and ad-hoc political formations that have no name at all, anarchist or otherwise, and thus often evade the view of sociologists and political scientists. The third and final reason is that the emerging anarchist movement has been obscured by the broader and more polyphonic setting in which it is partially embedded — the so-called "anti-globalisation" movement (an appellation that by itself deserves some criticism) — and is difficult to separate from this broader context.

I suggest to clarify our way towards an understanding of the anarchist movement by way of a few approximations. As a point of departure, we can look at a model suggested by Fitzgerald and Rodgers (2000:578), who theorise a category of "radical social movement organizations" (RSMOs). They differentiate these from the social movement mainstream in terms of their organizational structure, ideology, tactics, communication, and assessment of success. Generalising from three examples — the Industrial Workers of the World, the Student Non-violent Coordination Committees, and women's liberation groups, they arrive at the following five characteristics:

- *Internal structure*: "Non-hierarchical leadership; participatory democratic organization; egalitarian; "membership" based upon involvement; support indigenous leadership".
- *Ideology*: "Radical agenda; emphasis on structural change; flexible ideology; radical networks; global consciousness and connections; anti-militaristic stance".
- *Tactics*: "Non-violent action; mass actions; innovative tactics".
- *Communication*: "Ignored/misrepresented by media; reliance on alternative forms of communication (music, street theater, pamphlets, newsletters)".
- *Assessment of success*: "Limited resources; may be purposefully short-lived; substantive rationality; contribute to larger radical agenda; subject to intense opposition and government surveillance".

The keywords used in this formulation are already very close to a recognisably anarchist orientation, which will be examined in more detail below. The move from "radical" to "anarchist", in this context, lies in a thicker account of the substantive content of the attributes outlined

above, including some corrective statements (especially around tactics, which are not necessarily on a mass action model and not necessarily non-violent), and in devoting more attention to the connexions between tactics, organisation and ideology. First, however, the model has to be expanded so as to encompass not only a collection of discrete groups (as in "social movement organisations") but their interconnection and integration into a "movement" *tout court*.

The way in which such an integration can be achieved, I believe, is by focusing not on the nodes of a movement but on the ties that bind them. Fitzgerald and Rogers' model is in fact dated as far as the thrust of contemporary social movement theory is concerned, since this has moved from the focus on organisations to discussing movements as networks. For example, in Mario Diani's statement (which enjoys considerable scholarly currency), a social movement is defined from the start as "a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organisations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity" (Diani 1992:13). This definition already does a lot of work for us in integrating a network-based understanding of social movements, as well as including the cultural aspects of conflict and emphasising the power of identity. The recognition of networks as the primary structuring principle for social movements was suggested in pioneering studies of the Pentecostal and Black Power movements of the late 1960s (Gerlach and Hine 1970). Gerlach (2001) writes:

> The diverse groups of a movement are not isolated from each other. Instead, they form an integrated network or reticulate structure through nonhierarchical social linkages among their participants and through the understandings, identities, and opponents these participants share. Networking enables movement participants to exchange information and ideas and to coordinate participation in joint action. Networks do not have a defined limit but rather expand or contract as groups interact or part ways.

While the network model goes a long way towards explaining the architecture of the present-day social movement which I would designate as anarchist, a further step needs to be taken. The network as such is all form: the lines of communication and resource-flows of which it consists are presented as given, remaining silent about how these networks are consciously produced, reproduced and transformed by the concrete activities of individuals and groups in their specific political, social and cultural circumstances. For this reason Jeff Juris (2004:68) introduces the idea of a "cultural logic of networking" to designate the broad principles which, as cultural dispositions, guide activists who generate movement networks:

> The cultural logic of networking has given rise to what grassroots activists…call the "new way of doing politics." By this they mean precisely those network-based forms of political organization and practice based on non-hierarchical structures, horizontal coordination among autonomous groups, open access, direct participation, consensus-based decision making, and the ideal of the free and open circulation of information…While the command-oriented logic of traditional parties and unions is based on recruiting new members, developing unitary strategies, political representation through vertical structures and the pursuit of political hegemony, network-based politics involves the creation of broad umbrella spaces, where diverse organizations, collectives and networks converge around a few common hallmarks, while

> preserving their autonomy and identity-based specificity. Rather than recruitment, the objective becomes horizontal expansion and enhanced "connectivity" through articulating diverse movements within flexible, decentralized information structures that allow for maximal coordination and communication.

The move from inanimate structure to self-reproducing activity is clearly a step in the right direction. I would go further, however, and argue that the cultural logic of networking represents one area of a broader political culture, which is the most adequate referent for anarchism. The idea of political culture can be explained as a set of shared orientations towards "doing politics", wherein issues are framed, strategies are legitimised and collective interaction takes on enough regularity to structure members' mutual expectations. It is such a account of culture that can address movement networks in terms of their substantive characteristics, the context in which political "events, behaviors, institutions or processes…can be intelligibly — that is, thickly — described" (Geertz 1975:14). Thus the concept of political culture, appropriately framed to account for the realities of anarchist activities, can go a great way towards explaining what "moves" the movement.

Kenneth Tarrow objects to the idea of political culture as an overarching frame for the interpretation of social movement dynamics. He argues that political culture "is seldom sufficiently univocal or detached from the symbols that sustain the system to provide a firm basis for collective action against it" (Tarrow 1992:177). It would seem that although this may cause problems for the use of the term regarding social movements in general, the conditions that Tarrow stipulates are sufficient for enabling the use of political culture as a designation for anarchism in the context of the present study. Anarchist political culture is by no means univocal, but its opposition to both state and capitalism puts it at such a distance from elite and mainstream political cultures, that from the point of view of most of society the differences among anarchists recede into insignificance. As for being "detached from the symbols that sustain the system" — the dynamic here cannot be reduced to a binary of either participative endorsement of, or deliberate detachment from, that ensemble of symbols. Anarchists are animated, at least in part, by a third cultural logic, the movement of subversive appropriation known as "culture jamming". The term was coined in 1984 by the San Francisco audio-collage band Negativland, and in its broad resonances reflects the Situationists' preoccupation with *détournement*: an image, message, or artefact lifted out of context to create a new meaning (Situationist International 1959). As a tactic of guerilla communication, culture jamming includes anything from street theatre and cross-dressing to billboard alteration and media hoaxes, whereby cultural images and symbols in the public sphere are repositioned in a way that changes their meaning in a radical direction. Naomi Klein likens culture jamming to a semiotic *ju-jitsu* that uses corporations' own strength against them, "because anytime people mess with a logo, they are tapping into the vast resources spent to make that logo meaningful" (Klein 2000:281). It should further be clarified that I am using the term "political culture" in a sense distinct from that attached to an earlier configuration of the term (Almond and Verba 1964), denoting the supposedly overarching cultural factors shaping the development of entire national polities. In the terms used by Almond and Verba, my use of the term "political culture" parallels what they call a "subculture" (ibid., 26–9).

We can organise the orientations building up a distinctly anarchist political culture around four broad categories: forms of organisation, campaigning and direct action repertoires, discur-

sive aspects (political language, ideology, narrative, myth), and more broadly "cultural" shared attributes.

Forms of organisation

Whereas the network structure and networking activity discussed above account for the anarchist movement's organisation on the macro-level, something more needs to be said about the micro- and meso-levels. In this context, the most oft-mentioned constituent of anarchist organising is the "affinity group". The term refers to a small and autonomous group of anarchists, closely familiar to each other, who come together to undertake a specific action — whether in isolation or in collaboration with other affinity groups. The expression stems from the Spanish *grupos de afinidad*, which were the basic constituents of the Iberian Anarchist Federation during the Spanish civil war. Typically, an affinity group will consist of up to roughly fifteen participants, and individuals within it often take on specific roles for an action (medic, legal observer, driver etc.). The participants in an affinity group form a self-sufficient unit, plan their action down to the smaller details and look after each other on the streets. Whereas the term "affinity group", as used by anarchists, tends to designates an ad-hoc formation, the term "collective" is often used when speaking of a more permanent group. Collectives again have a small faceto- face "membership", and may exist for any ongoing task (such as a land-based collective operating an agricultural commune, an editorial collective of an anarchist publication, a collective running a particular campaign or research activity, or a trainers' collective dedicated to teaching skills to other activists — anything from bio-diesel production to stencil-art to consensus decision-making). A collective may also act as an affinity group for a particular protest or direct action outside its normal activities.

While affinity groups and collectives represent the micro-level of anarchist organising, whether ad-hoc or permanent, the bulk of ongoing anarchist activity takes place on the meso-level of the *local milieu*. This term is introduced here in reference to the (mini-)network of anarchists in a particular locale, such as a town or city. The local milieu is a context in which most but not all participants are closely familiar to one another, and may include participants who are also organised as collectives among themselves. The local milieu is the pool from which affinity groups are drawn for particular actions, and in the auspices of which many non-confrontational activities are organised without explicit affinity groups (stalls, leafleting, small demonstrations, and donation-generating events such as film screenings and parties). The local milieu is also the scene in which anarchists most often coordinate and collaborate with other actors, such as citizen associations, youth group and non-anarchist political organisations (typically the more radical elements of the charity and NGO spectrum and even local chapters of political parties — most often Greens).

On the macro-level (from the regional to the continental and global), the network form is the prevalent mode of organisation. Anarchist movement networks are ongoing, semi-structured venues for communication and coordination, which never have a formal membership or fixed boundaries. Thus, importantly, the network model should be differentiated from the "federation" model employed by twentieth-century anarchists and still used by a small number of "old-school" anarchist groups (see below). Nor are various networks separate entities, which operate in isolation from each other. In fact, the opposite is true: there is a great degree of overlap in activists' involvement in different networks, the distinction being one of function rather than membership.

One should thus distinguish between the realm of anarchist networks in their proper sense, as the segmentary, polycentric and reticular format of social-movement organisation and self-defined "Networks" like Earth First!, Dissent! or Anti Racist Action. The latter are more adequately described as "banners" under which certain parts of the anarchist macro-network collaborate on a given project. A banner, in this sense, is a convenient label or appellation for a certain goal or type of political activity, which can also — though not always — be accompanied by a concrete network, in the sense that people operating under the same banner in different locations have a significant level of communication tools (meetings, email lists, websites, a newsletter). Banners are even more fluid than networks. For example, a given group of activists in Britain might operate a free vegan street-kitchen today under the "Food not Bombs" banner, meet to design a leaflet against the G8 under the "Dissent!" banner tomorrow, and confront a far-right march through their town under the "Anti-Fascist Action" banner the following week. The use of a banner by a local group has been likened to the idea of opening up a local "franchise" — an idea which is also characteristic, with a thousand differences, of the Al-Qaeda "network" (again, in reality, a "banner").

Campaigning and direct action repertoires

In terms of action repertoires, anarchist political culture emphasises a "Do It Yourself" approach of direct action, mirrored by disinterest in operating through established political channels or in building political power within the state. This takes place within what is often framed as a dual strategy of confrontation to delegitimise the system and grassroots alternative-building from below. DIY politics often also translates into and a commitment to "being the change", on any level from personal relationships that address sexism and racism to sustainable living and communes.

To pre-empt the discussion in the next two chapters, two clarifications should be made. First, it is important to distinguish between direct action and a related concept, "civil disobedience". I take the latter to mean any conscious collective defiance of the law, either for moral reasons or in an attempt to mount pressure on the authorities to respond to one's demands. Thus Thoreau: "If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison, or give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate which to choose" (Thoreau 1849). Thus civil disobedience is essentially a confrontational form of political *dialogue* between insubordinate citizens and the state, which does not challenge the basic legitimacy of the latter (since the state is expected to act in response to the disobedients' demands — changing an unjust law, for example). Direct action, on the other hand, is an intervention to change reality in a desired course *without reference* to the authorities. It is often, but not necessarily, illegal — it can consist for example in the construction of alternative networks of material and informational exchange, self-education projects and other perfectly legal issues (cf. Beyer-Arnesen 2000).

A disagreement should be noted here with Martin Luther King's statement that "negotiation… is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored…to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation". On the distinction suggested above this is actually more adequate a description of civil disobedience, since it remains a matter of bringing issues to the public agenda. It should also be pointed out that King and

other practitioners of civil disobedience in the civil rights and peace movements often extolled the U.S. Constitution, calling on American society to live up to its professed ideals. Such rhetoric reinforces rather than challenges the status-quo on society's basic institutions.

Second, direct action already needs to be brought into connection with the concept of "prefigurative politics". This uncomfortable heading denotes a perspective first expressed by anarchists, which was re-articulated in movements revolving around feminism, ecology, radical democracy and spirituality, and is today central to many social movements' organisational culture, as a matter of reflexive self-awareness. In prefigurative politics, social movements' goals are "recursively built into [their] daily operation and organizational style. This is evident in affinity groups, decentralised organisation, decision-making by consensus, respect for differing opinions and an overall emphasis on the process as well as the outcomes of activism…It is the explicit attention to organization as a semiotic strategy and the attempt to work directly from basic values to daily practice that merits the designation of a 'culturalist' orientation; these are movements that actively symbolize who they are and what they want not just as end goals but as daily guides to movement practice" (Buechler 2000:207).

Discursive aspects

This heading is used to bring together those aspects of anarchist political activity which have to do with thinking, speaking and writing (as well as singing and performing). It is important to offer this as a separate sub-heading in order to emphasise that different political cultures generate, and are shaped by, different epistemologies — ways of organising their understanding of politics and making sense of them. While the substantive content of this heading is discussed more extensively in chapter 3, two remarks can be made here.

First, this ideational and epistemology-generating aspect of political culture can be connected to what social movement scholars have referred to as "collective action frames" — a concept used to explain the construction of meaning in social movements. For Snow and Benford (1992:136–8), *framing* "denotes an active, process-derived phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction… that simplifies and condenses the 'world out there' by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences and sequences of actions within one'spresent or part environment". For social movements, the product of framing activities is referred to as collective action frames. As punctuation, collective action frames "either underscore and embellish the seriousness and injustice of a social condition or redefine as unjust or immoral what was previously seen as unfortunate but perhaps tolerable". As encoders, they make "diagnostic and prognostic attribution…identifying culpable agents, be they individuals or collective processes and structures…[and] suggesting both a general line of action for ameliorating the problem and the assignment of responsibility for carrying out that action". Finally, they "enable activists to articulate and align a vast array of events and experiences so that they hand together in a relatively unified and meaningful fashion…The punctuated and encoded threads of information may be diverse and even incongruous, but they are woven together in such a way that what was previously inconceivable, or at least not clearly articulated, is now meaningfully interconnected".

We can also see, at this stage, that the focus on collective action frames as a constituent of political culture frees us from the expectations of close ideational definition and universal truth-claims that would have been associated with anarchism as a political theory. Borrowing loosely

from Kuhn's notion of a scientific paradigm, Gamson clarifies that "it is not events that overcome frames but rival frames that do better at getting interpretations to stick…Frames, like metaphors, are ways of organizing thinking about political issues. One should ask not whether they are true or false — that is, their empirical validity — but about their usefulness in increasing understanding and their economy and inclusiveness in providing a coherent explanation of a diverse set of facts" (Gamson 1992). Thus, the 'relevant criterion of judgement for the political epistemologies generated within a distinct political culture is not "objective truth", but "narrative fidelity" — "the degree, to which proffered framings resonate with cultural narrations, that is, with the stories, myths, and folk tales that are part and parcel of one's cultural heritage and thus function to inform events and experiences in the immediate present" (Snow and Benford 1998:210).

Second, it is important to include under this heading, along with the cultural articulation of political concepts and values, its more narrative-based elements, which we can refer to as "mythologies". These are the movement's orally transmitted stories about past mobilisations, previous cycles of struggle, and older historical episodes which are seen as an inspirations. These are an important aspect of political culture through which collective identity is reproduced and which function also as a mobilising resource. As Mark Bailey argues, the anarchist movement draws heavily on "non-western mythological discourses" which open up for it the possibility for "the development of a mythology of resistance…that is much more inclusive of previously marginalized voices than that of previous generations…[This] generates the potential to create a mythical and, hence, ideological discourse that, whilst seeking to generate a sense of solidarity and common purpose between widely disparate groups, can also be highly effective in generating a celebration of 'difference' without having to descend into pure relativism" (Bailey 2005). Such are the narratives that spin a thread leading from Chiapas to Seattle, or from Greenham Common to Porto Alegre, and which I explore in more depth in the next chapter.

Broader cultural attributes

Under this final heading we may include common aspects of the anarchist movement which are sometimes seen as "mere" lifestyle choices — although many activists will also look upon them as expressions of their values and politics. Among these can be mentioned the prevalence of vegetarian/vegan diets among activists, openness to non-heterosexual and non-monogamous relationships, the use of cannabis and other "soft" drugs, and (perhaps most strikingly) the prominence of both punk and folk/"hippie" preferences in terms of music, dress and disposition. These factors are closely related to the anarchist movements' fermentation within these two subcultural spaces since the late Sixties, as part of its genealogy explored in the next chapter. As Alex Plows argues in her study of British environmental direct-action movements, "the development of culture, community, social networks and lifestyle choices associated with radical political ideas also form much of movement activity, political praxis, and help to sustain mobilisation in the long term, bridging activist generations…the 'sustaining' function of movement culture and lifestyle is part of what makes a social movement able to mobilise and take other sorts of more 'political' action; definitions of 'political activity' need to include culture and lifestyle" (Plows 2002:138).

The presence of broader cultural attributes plays an important role in the designation of collective identities in the anarchist movement. Aspects such as dress style, which are visible before any political conversation is engaged in, serve as "a shorthand designation announcing a status — a set of attitudes, commitments, and rules for behavior — that those who assume the identity can

be expected to subscribe to…it is also an individual announcement of affiliation, of connection with others" (Friedman and McAdam 1992:112).

The Role of Identity

So much for the basic account of anarchist political culture. At this stage, some comments should be made about political identity, and its function in creating cohesiveness in social movements in general and the anarchist movement in particular. As Gamson (1992:60) argues,

> Construction of collective identity is one step in challenging cultural domination. The content must necessarily be adversarial in some way to smoke out the invisible and arbitrary elements of the dominant cultural codes. No matter how personally important it becomes for participants, it is never merely a fulfilment but a strategic step in achieving cultural changes that are mediated by the movement's external targets…the locus of collective identity is cultural; it is manifested through the language and symbols by which it is publicly expressed…to measure it, one would ask people about the meaning of labels and other cultural symbols, not about their own personal identity.

No less importantly, however, is the explicit self-contrasting with other political actors which decisively sharpens movements' identities, and which forms the final element of what enables us to refer to a movement as "anarchist". Tarrow (1992:197) hypothesises that "although their bases lie in preexisting cultural traditions, new frames of meaning result from the struggles over meaning within social movements and from their clash with their opponents. They are elaborated not intellectually but through struggle, which is always a struggle over meaning as well as over resources". This hypothesis seems corroborated in the present context. In the past few years a process of fragmentation has drawn clear lines within the broad arena of "alternative globalisation" movements, more clearly delineating the anarchist networks within it and causing those associated with these networks to reflexively consolidate their shared identity and cultural emphases. It is in this process that we can finally detect, by way of opposition and mutual differentiation, the emergence of a distinctly anarchist political culture within contemporary social movement networks. We are thus in possession of an analytical framework which is useful in distinguishing between anarchist and non-anarchist elements in the "alternative globalisation" arena, precisely because it is *not* based on an external criterion (whether theoretical or historical) but derived from the very same process through which activists define their own affiliations.

The reflexive process in question in one of the fracture of broad alliances towards the consolidation of new, narrower ones — the breakdown of the short-lived coalitions, displayed most prominently in Seattle, between political parties, unions, environmentalists and grassroots movements. With the ebb of "anti-globalisation" protests in the first years of this century, the movement's various constituents faced a dual response from their opponents. On the one hand, attempts at co-optation, exemplified by the IMF and other organisations' launch of a "civil society engagement" programs; and on the other hand, state repression that peaked, in the North, during the Genoa G8 summit in July 2001. These strategies were largely successful, with many of the more mainstream groups and organisations rushing to mark the dialogue offered to them as victories,

while deriding the direct-action elements who now became “disruptive”. This process clearly demarcated two different two wings of the movement, those who believed that the initial push of grassroots activity should now be capitalised on, resulting in (still awaited) systemic reforms and a seat at the table for unions and NGOs, and those who retained their radical demands for thoroughgoing social transformation. The latter, at least as far as movements in the North are concerned, is where I propose to locate today’s resurgent anarchist movement. It was precisely the fact that the first group, whom radicals were prone to see as having “sold out”, was now denying solidarity to their former fellowprotesters *and* using the word anarchism as a knee-jerk label for violent disruption, that pushed the radical groups together and allowed them to consolidate a shared identity, reaffirming their differentiated political culture *as against* the “reformist” elements of “the movement”.

Perhaps the most clear example of this process of reproducing collective identity through opposition to other movement constituents was the recent European Social Forum, mentioned in he introduction. which took place in London in October 2004. During that week, London was a microcosmos in which the conflicts and opposing tendencies within the so-called “anti-globalisation movement” were on full display. On the one hand was the official ESF, actively supported by the Mayor of London and dominated behind the scenes by his Socialist Action group along with the Trotskyist Socialist Workers’ Party, large NGOs and trade unions (Juris 2005, Nuñes 2005, Kingsnorth 2005). Many of the organisations involved in the ESF were operating recruiting stalls in a bid to increase their memberships, informed by a strategy of building political power within the state-sanctioned realm of civil society involvement, so as to challenge neo-liberal policies and global trade rules on a parliamentary and governmental level. The debates and plenaries of the ESF were in fact lectures, with several speakers on the podium and a passive audience in the seats. The content was determined in closed meetings, and a registration fee was required to enter the event. On the other hand were the numerous Autonomous Spaces, organised by what many of their own participants would have described as the “real” movement — grassroots activists committed to working in structures that are decentralized, antiauthoritarian and participatory, and whose primary forms of political expression were direct action and self-organised community initiatives. The participants belonged to the same activist networks that had organised the blockades of the WTO summit in Seattle, the riotous Carnival Against Capital in the City of London, and the humanshield operations of the International Solidarity Movement in Palestine. The Autonomous Spaces not only incorporated differences with the program of the ESF in terms of its content, which was more clearly anti-capitalist, feminist and ecological, but also in terms of its organizational model: the event would be organised openly, entry was free, anyone who wanted to organise a discussion or workshop could do so, and decisions would be taken by consensus among all participants.

The participants in the autonomous spaces established their joint identity on the basis of some clearly shared characteristics, shared *in opposition* to those prevailing in the official ESF: active resistance to capitalism, the state, racism, patriarchy, homophobia; horizontal organisation based on a network model and lacking formal internal hierarchies; a struggle that does not seek to take power or restructure society from above; and an orientation that we can momentarily locate around the notion of “being the change” you want to see in the world. Presented in opposition to the topdown organisation and reform-seeking orientation of the parties, NGOs and unions in the ESF, we can see here a process of “protagonist framing” which “establishes distinctions between in-groups and out-groups and a strong we-feeling through boundary maintenance” (Buechler

2000:190). To stress once again: as characteristics of a movement space, all of these elements are *not* meant as a designation of a theoretical position or a matter of opinion. Rather, they are not about what the people associated with the space think, but about what they do — how they organise, what type of action they take, who they ally with etc. This is to say that they are artefacts of political culture, conveying manifestations of praxis and the shared, habitual orientations towards this praxis that is detectable in activists' cumulative speech-acts.

Here, then, we can return with more confidence to the issue of names, labels and titles. Jeff Juris states that although "this emerging political praxis can be broadly defined as anarchist…these emerging political identities are not necessarily identical to anarchism *in the strict ideological sense*; rather, they share specific cultural affinities revolving around the broader values associated with the network as an emerging cultural ideal: open access, the free circulation of information, self-management as well as coordination based on diversity and autonomy" (Juris 2004, 68). The concern which motivates Juris is precisely the concern over association with some "strict ideological sense" of anarchism, understood as code for "dogma" (unlike the scholarly sense of ideology as a positioning of concepts and their interconnections — cf. Freeden 1996). But by shifting the designation of anarchism from political theory/ideology to political culture, we are able to cast a new light on the appellation and remove this proviso. Thus we also no longer need to talk about the movement as "broadly" anarchist or "inspired by" anarchism, since this would precisely mean that we are reifying the category expecting "really" anarchist movements to conform to some preconceived ideal type. However, once we understand that anarchism *is* a matter of political culture, with all the flexibility and mutation that this term includes, it becomes possible to speak of a movement that is anarchist plain and simple.

If we are to look at the self-designations of activists in situations such as the London ESF autonomous spaces, we find a relatively small number of titles used selfreferentially. The activists speak of themselves as "autonomous", "anti-authoritarians" or, in explicit opposition to the organisational paradigm of the official forum, "horizontals". But all of these new words are invented *for the sole purpose of not saying "anarchist"* — as a result of the anxieties surrounding the use of that word. However, the words anarchism, anti-authoritarianism or horizontalism should not be seen as standing at odds with each other — precisely because they refer to exactly the same political culture. If these activists were to shed the notion that "anarchist", *unlike* "horizontal" or "anti-authoritarian", is meant to designate any unitary and wellformulated set of theoretical positions; if, instead, they would accept it as a name for a particular praxis and the shared, habitual orientations towards this praxis — then as far as one-word labels go, they would surely recognise "anarchist" as apt a label as any other. They might still not make a habit of calling themselves anarchists, but they at least wouldn't mind being called that any more — or even find reason to reclaim the label (Starhawk 2004):

> I might not even choose to apply the word 'anarchism' to my own beliefs, but I think there's a value in using it, the same value and the same reasoning that has led me to call myself a Witch for all these years. And it's this — that when there's a word with so much charge attached, that arouses so much energy, it's a sign that you are transgressing on territory that the arbiters of power do not want you to tread, that you are starting to think the unthinkable, look behind the curtain…to reclaim the word 'Anarchism' would be to wrest the stick out of hand that's using it to beat us, that very much does not want us to deeply question power.

Returning to anarchist political language, mention must be made in this context of a distinctive practice whereby anarchists generate condensed statements known as "principles of unity" or "hallmarks". These fulfil three important political functions. Looking inwards, they establish a frame of reference for participants that can be invoked symbolically as a set of basic guidelines for resolving disputes. Looking outwards, they attempt to express the movement's political identity to a general audience. And looking "sideways", they define the lines along which solidarity is extended or denied to other movement actors. The most widely utilised example of such a statement are the hallmarks of the Peoples' Global Action network. These have served extensively and worldwide as a basis for actions and coalitions. The current wording of the hallmarks is as follows (PGA 2002):

1. A very clear rejection of capitalism, imperialism and feudalism; all trade agreements, institutions and governments that promote destructive globalisation.
2. We reject all forms and systems of domination and discrimination including, but not limited to, patriarchy, racism and religious fundamentalism of all creeds. We embrace the full dignity of all human beings.
3. A confrontational attitude, since we do not think that lobbying can have a major impact in such biased and undemocratic organisations, in which transnational capital is the only real policy-maker.
4. A call to direct action and civil disobedience, support for social movements' struggles, advocating forms of resistance which maximize respect for life and oppressed peoples' rights, as well as the construction of local alternatives to global capitalism.
5. An organisational philosophy based on decentralisation and autonomy.

As content-rich statements, such documents provide more than a sufficient basis for an ideological analysis of anarchism as undertaken in Chapter 3 (see also ARA undated, IMC 2000). What is at issue here is not a constitution or a political programme, but rather a rhetorical space in which is indicated the "flavour" of politics that PGA represents — effectively a statement of collective identity.

Now in spite of the clear resonances of its hallmarks, PGA has never been defined explicitly as an anarchist network. Missing from the hallmarks is the explicit rejection of the state, but on the other hand it could be interpreted with the addition that *all* governments "promote destructive globalisation". This intentional vagueness is mainly because, on the global level applicable to the PGA network as a whole, an explicit reference to anarchism would not do justice to the diversity of its participant groups, which include numerous peasant movements from Asia and Latin America who have never identified with anarchism *nor with any other set of ideas rooted in a by and-large European historical experience.*

In a European or North American setting, however, hallmarks like those of PGA establish the perimeters of a decidedly anarchist political space by way of elimination, so to speak. They exclude such a long list of features of society and ways of approaching social change, that what is left, at least in terms of public discourse in advanced capitalist countries, is inevitably some kind of anarchism. This happens entirely without reference to anarchism as a label, but the results remain the same. The third hallmark, for example, explicitly distances the PGA political space from

the ones in which NGOs and advocacy groups operate, working to change the WTO and other global trade systems from within the logic of their own operation through lobbying. The fifth hallmark can easily be understood as an exclusion of the centralised and hierarchical organising methods of the authoritarian left. At the same time, its very laconic nature reserves the space for a diversity of non-hierarchical organising traditions, from the traditional tribal-based associations of Maori and Maya through Indian *sarvodaya*-inspired campaigns to the more mechanically structured delegate systems of Western anarchism.

The differentiating function of the hallmarks comes into even sharper relief when it is considered that their present wording is the result of two major revisions, which took place at the Bangalore conference and at the third global conference in Cochabamba, Bolivia in September 2002. In both cases, the explanation for these revisions given by conference participants was explicitly in reference to the need to differentiate the PGA political space from competing ones. In Bangalore, the second hallmark was added in order to mark a clear separation from conservative and nationalist politicians who had begun to spin anti-globalisation agendas, such as Pat Buchanan in the U.S. According to the PGA website, the goal was "to distance clearly PGA from organisations of the extreme right looking for a political space to spread their xenophobic rejection of globalisation". At the same conference, "the character of the network was redefined: its previous focus on 'free' trade agreements (and on the WTO in particular) was broadened, since we reached the consensus that PGA should be a space to communicate and coordinate globally not just against treaties and institutions, but also around the social and environmental issues related to them. An opposition to the capitalist development paradigm in general was made explicit" (PGA ibid., cf. PGA 1997). This change was incorporated into the first hallmark in Cochabamba, where it previously endorsed a rejection "of the WTO and other trade liberalisation agreements (like APEC, the EU, NAFTA, etc.)". At the same time, imperialism and feudalism were added to the list, the latter "at the request of Nepalese and Indian delegates who remarked that it it remains the immediate form of domination for many in that area".

Old-school and New-school

In closing this chapter, and as a bridge to the the next one, I would like to demonstrate the utility of an approach to anarchism as political culture for explaining a curious tension within the movement. Ultimately, it is the mainspring of conflict among anarchists around things such as forms of organisation (formal or informal) and the attachment to an explicitly (and often exclusively) "class struggle" politics. Perhaps the most emblematic expression of this tension is the controversy generated by Murray Bookchin, who announces that

> The 1990s are awash in self-styled anarchists who — their flamboyant radical rhetoric aside — are cultivating a latter-day anarcho-individualism that I will call lifestyle anarchism. Its preoccupations with the ego and its uniqueness and its polymorphous concepts of resistance are steadily eroding the socialistic character of the libertarian tradition…Ad hoc adventurism, personal bravura, an aversion to theory oddly akin to the antirational biases of postmodernism, celebrations of theoretical incoherence (pluralism), a basically apolitical and anti-organizational commitment to imagination, desire, and ecstasy, and an intensely self-oriented enchantment of everyday

> life…a state of mind that arrogantly derides structure, organization, and public involvement; and a playground for juvenile antics. (Bookchin 1994:9–10)

The book's vituperative attacks take in their sweep a very eclectic mix of writers including L. Susan Brown, Hakim Bey and John Zerzan, all of whom are subjected to a harangue of abuse including such savouries as "fascist", "decadent", "petit bourgeois", "infantile", "personalistic", "yuppie", "lumpen", "bourgeois" and "reactionary". The diatribe soon received a no-less acidic retort from Bob Black, in *Anarchy after Leftism* (Black 1998). He points out that that label "lifestyle anarchism" is a straw man constructed by Bookchin to encompass everything he dislikes about contemporary anarchism — which seems to be all but his own views. But what seems to really be at issue is Bookchin's claim to have an authoritative voice on the correct definition of anarchism. This effectively introduces the idea of an anarchist orthodoxy, from whose standpoint new trends in anarchism are denied legitimacy and refused solidarity. This position is said to reflect the preoccupations of the authoritarian left, thus the call for a "post-leftist" anarchism. Elsewhere (Black 1994:31), he argues that

> Anything which has entered importantly into the practice of the anarchists has a place in theanarchist phenomenon-in-process, whether or not it is logically deducible from the idea or even contradicts it. Sabotage, vegetarianism, assassination, pacifism, free love, co-operatives and strikes are all aspects of anarchism which their anarchist detractors try to dismiss as unanarchist.

This insistence on anarchism as a necessarily heterogeneous and heterodox phenomenon-in-process is what invites the condemnation of sectarianism and closed horizons against what Black calls "Leftist" anarchists, who tout the anarchist banner in terms that seek ideological closure, affixing it to a given meaning and denying the genuineness of other anarchisms. In a similar vein, the breadth and diversity of what John Moore thinks should "count" as anarchism leads him to call for an "anarchist maximalism" in which everything is up for criticism and re-evaluation, "not least when coming into contact with those icons that are vestiges of classical anarchism or earlier modes of radicalism (e.g., work, workerism, history) or those icons characteristic of contemporary anarchism (e.g., the primitive, community, desire and — above all — nature). Nothing is sacred, least of all the fetishised, reified shibboleths of anarchism" (Moore 1998; cf. Landstreicher 2002, McQuinn 2003).

On the surface, then, the debate again appears to be over the possibility of an anarchist theoretical "line", or some form of closure around the content of anarchism. Graeber (ibid.) frames the issue in these terms, making a distinction within the movement. On the one hand, a minority tendency of "sectarian" or "capital-A anarchist groups", informed by a strict ideology or political programme; on the other hand, a majority tendency of "small-a anarchists" who distance themselves from strict ideological definition and who "are the real locus of historical dynamism right now".

Graeber does not name many names, but by "capital-A anarchists" he clearly means groups such as those clustered around International Libertarian Solidarity (www.ils-sil.org), the International of Anarchist Federations (www.iafifa. org/), and the International Workers Association (www.iwa-ait.org). I agree with Graeber's assessment of the relative significance of the two tendencies. But the terms on which the distinction itself is drawn should be different. Starting with "sectarianism", the founding declaration of ILS is quite clear:

> As libertarians we all drink from the same revolutionary spring of water: direct action, selfmanagement, federalism, mutual aid and internationalism. Nevertheless, the different flavours and currents of this spring have caused on too many occasions fractionalism, divergency and separation. We do not wish to see who has got the clearest or purest water, we believe that they are all right and wrong, pure and impure. (ILS 2001)

It is also questionable whether many members of today's capital-A camp really take their anarchism dogmatically, as if it were a "party line". This impression may be given by some anarchist groups' current revival of the Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists which calls for anarchist organisations based on Theoretical Unity, Tactical Unity, Collective Action and Discipline, and Federalism (Makhno et.al.1926, cf. Malatesta 1927). However, most platformists emphasise that they only "broadly identify" with the organisational practice it advocates, "so it is a starting point for our politics, not an end point" (Anarkismo.net 2005).

Based on the framework established in this chapter we can provide a more fruitful explanation. The crucial difference between the two groups lies, not in their having or not having doxa, but in their political culture — their concrete activities and outlooks, methods of organising and political language. What is at issue with the so-called capital-A anarchists is that their political culture corresponds much more closely to that of the anarchist movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Such groups are not marked so much by their stress on "theoretical unity", as by forming a deliberate continuity with the earlier movement's the methods of action, ways of organising and campaigning issues. Organisation typically means having anarchist *organisations* — with formal office, representation and voting — rather than decentralised networks of autonomous individuals and informal groups. Unionism, publishing and demonstrations are given a stronger stress than they are among groups that revolve around direct action and communal experiments. Labour issues and anti-militarism tend to precede ecological and anti-racist issues. Finally, there is less recognition of the personal-as-political formula, and less of an openness to alternative lifestyles and non-western world-views. As a result, the difference between the two anarchisms is not that of capital-A or small-a (anarchism with or without doxa), but rather a historical difference in formulations within a particular genre — an old-school / new-school distinction of the kind applicable to art, akin to the difference between the Baroque styles of Schütz and Bach.

But how is it that we are confronted with such a minority political culture, a relic of an earlier age? The next chapter provides an explanation, by focusing on the discontinuity of the anarchist movement in the twentieth century. The old-school anarchist organisations are either the re-inhabited shells, or the conscious imitations, of those that existed prior to the fall of anarchism around the second World War. The networks of new-school anarchists, the anarchist movement that forms the subject matter of this thesis, are an entirely new creation whose genealogy needs to be traced along different threads.

Chapter 2: Threads of Resistance

Tracing the Genealogy of Contemporary Anarchism

> That night we sat across from each other sipping tea and singing stories, weaving the past into our present; speaking of yesterday as if it had already been entered and meticulously recorded into the history books. I felt the philosophical knife of my life before and my life after Seattle slide deep into my skin. I had broken open; I was seeing new land with views of rebellion and courage, a glimpse that will be with me through the stories of repression and time and survival. That will outlive me. I knew then that I might never have the words to tell this story, our story, a story of re-birth.
>
> — Rowena Kennedy Epstein, from *We Are Everywhere* (London 2003)

An account of the recent history of contemporary anarchism, in its emergence over the past decades, is not readily available since a thorough history of anarchism in the social struggles in the last thirty years or so has yet to be written. The most recent major history of anarchism — Peter Marshall's excellent *Demanding the Impossible* — dedicates a mere one eighth of its pages to modern anarchism, and essentially leaves off its treatment of the movement in 1968. General accounts of contemporary anticapitalist resistance are beginning to emerge (Notes from Nowhere 2003, Kingsnorth 2003), and it is clear that the authors are aware of the anarchist dimensions of contemporary struggles. However, little attention has been paid specifically to anarchism's patterns of re-emergence.

What I would like to suggest here is that that the sources of anarchism in its contemporary idiom are largely *discontinuous* with the traditional thread of anarchist movement and theory, as it developed in the context of workers' and peasants' movements in Europe and the Americas during the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries. Overall the re-emergence of large movements sharing a broadly anarchist approach is only ephemerally related to the anarchist movement of Makhno, Goldman, Zapata and Malatesta. Instead, the mainspring of today's anarchism can be found in the intersections of several trends of social criticism and struggle whose beginnings were never consciously "anarchist" — in particular the cross-issue formulations of radical ecology, the waves of militant feminism, black and queer liberation movements, and the anti-neoliberal internationalism launched by movements in the global South, most celebrated of which are the Mexican Zapatistas. Analysing these intersections in full is well beyond the limits of the present work. Still, brief mention can be made of several interrelated processes which have contributed to establishing a recognisably anarchist trajectory for current struggles. Implied in all of them is the constant re-definition of anarchism itself, with new areas of attention and new formulations of key ideological positions. These must be incorporated into any account of anarchism that remains sensitive to its evolving character.

Defeat and Stagnation

As anarchist historian George Woodcock argues, the discontinuity of the anarchist movement is perhaps its most conspicuous characteristic. Unlike Marxism, he says, anarchism historically "presents the appearance, not of a swelling stream flowing on to its sea of destiny…but rather of water percolating through porous ground — here forming for a time a strong underground current, there gathering into a swirling pool, trickling through crevices, disappearing from sight, and then reemerging where the cracks in the social structure may offer it a course to run" (Woodcock 1962:15). In the same passage, Woodcock comments on the harmony between this "protean" quality of anarchism and its own anti-authoritarian sensibilities. However, he does not trace this quality to its socio-political origins, which are important in order to understand the special dynamic of the anarchist movement's reproduction. A key to this dynamic may be gleaned from the most simple exercise in historical correlation: one notices very easily that anarchism's periods of rise and decline consistently parallel periods of increasing and declining intensity of social struggle. The periods in which anarchist movement has been most impressive — in terms of largest numbers, highest intensity of action and appearance of key texts — are always found in years where social struggle peaks, such as those surrounding a great revolution. To see this one need only look at the swelling of anarchist ranks and explosion of anarchist literature in the build-up to the revolutionary periods around 1871, 1918 and 1936. In each of its reincarnations, anarchism takes on very different features, not only in its organisational forms but also in the contours of its critique of present society, in its speculations on alternatives and in its revolutionary strategies. Struggle is the lifeblood of anarchism, it is what gives anarchist politics their dynamism and urgency. However, periods of decline in struggle, as well as massive repression in its aftermath, have spelled stagnation and decline for the anarchist movement, making for the discontinuity just mentioned. The renaissance witnessed today in anarchist activity and ideas is no different.

By 1939, the anarchist movement was dead. The events of the Spanish revolution and civil war had eradicated the last anarchist stronghold in Europe and elsewhere, and while never completely disappearing from the political stage, the anarchist movement after the second World War could be only protrayed as in a state of utter collapse. Writing twenty years later, Woodcock lamented anarchism as a failed and forgotten cause, leaving behind only scattered anarchist groupsucles and publications which "form only the ghost of the historical anarchist movement, a ghost that inspires neither fear among governments nor hope among the peoples…During the past forty years the influence it once established has dwindled, by defeat after defeat and by the slow draining of hope almost to nothing. (443)

In analysing the waning of anarchism in the twentieth century, three main factors can be brought into account. The first and most important was the physical elimination of the European anarchist movement by both Fascist and Leninist dictatorships.

In Moscow, the black flag flew for the last time on February 8th 1921, during the huge funeral procession of Petr Kropotkin. A month later, the Kronstadt rebellion led by the Social Revolutionaries and Anarcho-Syndicalists was ruthlessly supressed, inaugurating an open season on the Russian anarchists. The final defeat of the Makhnovschina in August that year led Trotsky to boast that "At last the Soviet government, with an iron broom, has rid Russia of anarchism" (Quoted in Voline 1974:308. See also Goldman 1925, Maximoff 1940, Avrich 1973, Arshinov 1974, Skirda 2004). Many anarchist militants and writers, including Nestor Makhno, Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman fled to exile. In subsequent years the Cheka (and later the N.C.V.D.)

rendered impossible any renewal of libertarian dissent, first in Russia and after the war in the entire Soviet bloc (e.g. the swift supression of the 1956 Hungarian revolt). In Italy and Germany, fierce repression under the Mussolini and Hitler regimes quickly decimated anarchist cells and labour unions along with the rest of the left — a project carried to all countries occupied by the Axis. Anarchist militants either escaped to allied countries or joined partisan forces, only to be left few and disorganised in the post-war period (Marshall 1992:451–2 and 481–2, Levy (1989). "The Italian USI, the largest syndicalist union in the world, was driven underground and then out of existence. The German FAUD, Portuguese CGT, Dutch NSV, French CDSR and many more in Eastern Europe and Latin America were not able to survive the fascism and military dictatorships of the 1930s and 40s…In Germany over 1,000 trials for high treason were carried against militants of the FAUD…many of whom didn't survive the concentration camps…The Polish syndicalist union with 130,000 workers, the ZZZ, was on the verge of applying for membership of the IWA when it was crushed by the Nazi invasion (MacSimóin 1993).

These events came in the wake of a fierce wave of repression in America. For a brief historic moment in 1918", writes Paul Buhle (2005), "Wobblies declared the Russian 'soviets' (literally, 'workers' councils') to be mirrors of their own activity. Then came the red scares of 1919 — 21 in the United States, followed by the crushing of a vast and powerful Italian working-class uprising and other bitter disappointments…Prosecutorial charges of "criminal syndicalism" mystified later generations of radicals (as well as civil libertarians)", and hundreds aliens were deported under the 1918 Immigration Act designed specifically to criminalise radical alien workers. "During the uprisings of 1919, amid massive May Day parades, a general strike in Seattle, and solidarity actions to prevent war goods being shipped to counter-revolutionary forces in embattled Russia, it nevertheless seemed for an extended moment that persecution only deepened the class struggle. Then it was over. Within a year, the young Communist movement had nearly destroyed itself (with considerable help from police agents) along with the Socialist Party in a round of wild factionalism…a calamitous split in the IWW developed over a complex of internal issues, including centralization of the organizational leadership, and the movement ultimately retreated into an educational/agitational framework.

Anarchism made its last stand in Spain, where the first period of the civil war had brought most of Catalunya under anarchist control, continuing material and political pressure brought the movement to heel within less than a year. For reasons subject to much controversy among anarchist and non-anarchist commentators alike, the central organs of the Spanish movement — the Confederación Nacional de Trabajo (CNT) and the Federación Anarquista Iberica (FAI) — were by and large co-opted by mid-1937 into the statist organs of the Generalitat, which sidelined the anarchist militias and all but abandoned the process of economic collectivisation. Dissenting factions were subsequently put down by the government, increasingly Stalinist in its political orientation and methods, and Franco's victory sent almost all of the remaining active anarchists into exile (Marshall 1992:464–7, Woodcock 1962:363–375. cf. Goméz Casas 1986, Peirats 1977, Orwell 1938).

The second factor in the continued lethargy after the war was a general relaxation of social struggle in capitalist states — which affected the prospects for all socialist movements. In Europe and the U.S., the post-war industrial boom and economic reconstruction programs such as the Marshall Plan were accompanied by a welfarestatist orientation, and the domestication of the large labour unions. This placed controls on the most overtly exploitative features of capitalist relations of production, and, consequently, on the social tensions arising from them. In the South,

anarchist tendencies did surface from time to time in anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist struggles, but only marginally so. The example most often mentioned in this context is that of the Indian struggle for independence, and especially the anarchist influences on Mohandas Gandhi (Marshall 1992:412–7). Still, it was clearly Gandhi's commitment to satyagraha (non-violent/passive civil disobeidence), rather than any anarchist sensibilities, that most captured the imagination of Indians and outsiders alike. Gandhi can indeed be said to have had anarchist leanings, with his continued suspicion of state power, his refusal of an instrumental ends-justifying-means approach, and his call for a village-based economy and a stateless decentralised democracy as ultimate ideals. But his strong puritanical tendencies, his cultivation of his own charismatic leadership, his cooperation with statist Indian National Congress and his failure to directly criticise the Indian government on any occasion after independence, all make Gandhi's anarchist "credentials" ambiguous at best. Generally speaking, most struggles in the South after the second World War were more influenced by nationalism or Marxism than by anarchism (but see Dirlik 1991, Mbah and Igariwey 2001, Adams 2002b).

Third and finally, there were the ideological rigidities accompanying the bi-ploar international framework of the cold war. In the 1950s, the landscape of antagonistic political imagination was dominated by Marxism-Leninism, which had taken not only symbolic ground as a "successful" case of revolution, but also material ground in the form of the Comintern, which marshalled Soviet support for (and sometimes manufacturing of) its own brand of dissent where it was perceived to serve the interests of the USSR. In such a context, anarchism was often seen as an outdated and failed orientation. Some anarchist organs were certainly resurrected after the war — for example the Italian anarchist paper Umanita Nova, which runs to this day, and several anarchist federations and unions were restarted. But overall their impact on the political landscape was infinitesimal compared to before the war.

An Haphazard Rebirth

In the 1960s, however, the threads of political antagonism which would weave together to form the new anarchist movement were already beginning to take shape, as different social movements quite independently began articulating some or many anarchist values and attitudes. Woodcock's comments on the movement of May 1968 in France are key to understanding the more general dynamic of anarchist regeneration in recent decades. The traditional anarchist organisations and intellectuals played no real part in the movement, which exemplified

> the way in which anarchist ideas and anarchist tactics can emerge spontaneously in a situation where the actors for the most part do not regard themselves as anarchists and have little knowledge of anarchist history or of the classic libertarian writings…it was among the uncelebrated rank and file of the movement…that the anarchist spirit often appeared in its purest form…an impressive experiment in free organisation, and perhaps the nearest thing to a truly anarchist revolution that history has yet seen. (Woodcock1985:ch.10)

Similarly in the United States,

> In the great kaleidoscope of New Radical trends and organizations that emerged…during the counter-cultural 1960s, there is no doubt that anarchism played an important

> role, though it is not always easy to establish its presence since explicit statements of anarchistic loyalties were rare and the groups of avowed anarchists remained few and scattered…the basic ideas of anarchism…have come down to the New Radicals…not through direct reading, but in a kind of mental nutrient broth of remnants of the old ideologies which pervade the air. (Woodcock1985:ch.14)

There are several major trends under which events from the 1960s onwards can be organised. What follows is a broad-stroke survey of these trends — though the lack of organised data must leave this account quite open to counter-interpretations.

We can begin with the proliferation of direct action in social movements. Direct action was an omnipresent hallmark of anarchist political expression for over a century, inherent in its insurrectionary traditions, in sabotage and contestation "at the point of production" (a refrain coined by IWW militants, and in the formation of communes, free schools and militias. While the civil rights movement and the movement against the Vietnam war mainly employed methods of civil disobedience, direct action (in the sense defined in the previous chapter) returned to prominence throughout the 1970s and 1980s. One of the primary sites for this was the nonviolent blockades against nuclear power and weapons, which drew together pacifists, early environmentalists and feminists, though not the traditional Left (Touraine et.al 1983b, Midnight Notes 1985, Welsh 2001). The Abalone Alliance, which in the early 1980s forced the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant in California to shut down, saw a prominent involvement of women who explicitly called themselves anarcha-feminists. Through their involvement "the anarcha-feminists were able to do a great deal to define the political culture that the Abalone would bequeath to subsequent incarnations of the direct action movement. That political culture helped to create more space for internal differences in the Abalone, and in later organisations, than there had been in the Clamshell [Alliance]. It strengthened the role of the counterculture within the direct action movement, and it opened the movement to the spirituality that later became one of its most salient aspects…anarchia-feminism reinforced the commitment to a utopian democratic vision and a political practice based on the values it contained." (Epstein 1991:95–6). Direct action under its "constructive" aspect can be seen in the numerous self-organised urban and rural communities that were set up in Europe and North America in this period. More violent direct action was also present, primarily against the Franco regime (Christie 2005) and in the bombings of the Angry Brigade in Britain (Vague 1997, Sellwood 2005). From the 1980s onwards, direct action also became the primary method of political expression for radical ecological movements, as in the wilderness defence of Earth First! (Wall 1999) or broader social and environmental struggles such as the British anti-roads movement (Plows 1998).

At the same time, many activists were increasingly departing from the top-down models of organisation that characterised the old European Left as well as in American groups such as the National Organisation of Women, the large anti-Vietnam War coalitions or Students for a Democratic Society (and, later, its wannabe "revolutionary cadre" the Weathermen). From the 1970s on, movements increasingly began to organise themselves in a decentralised manner without (formal) structures or leaders, inspired by critiques of political centralisation that emanated in particular from the New Left in the late 1960s and feminist circles in the 1970s (Cohn-Bendit 1968, Bookchin 1972, Lewis and Baideme 1972). Anti-nuclear blockades and sabotage actions, for example, were often organised through the cooperation of decentralised affinity groups, reproducing the model used by the Iberian Anarchist Federation in the 1930s. At the same time,

the involvement in these actions of Quakers and feminists (anarcha- and otherwise) introduced consensus methods and "spokescouncil" structures for decision making — until then quite alien to anarchists, but today enjoying a prominent, if contested, position in anarchist organising (Kaplan 1997). Later, "autonomist" movements in Italy and Germany would extend the decentralised logic of collective action in antagonism to the state, further cementing this aspect of an anarchist political culture (Katsiaficas 1997).

Another no less significant source of anarchist regeneration was the increasing linkage among multiple forms of oppression in the discourse of political activists. Since the late 1960s, social movements have been increasing their emphasis on the intersections of numerous forms of oppression, taking struggle beyond what were previously specific agendas (as with the cooperation between elements of the SDS and the Black Panthers). Later black women, marginalised in overwhelmingly white feminist circles and often facing blatant sexism in the black liberation movements, began mobilising in autonomous black feminist (or, in Alice Walker's term, "womanist") movements heralded by the founding in 1973 of the National Black Feminist Organization and of Black Women Organized for Action (Roth 2004, Collins 2000). These movements were soon to highlight the concept of "simultaneous oppression" — a personal and political awareness of how race, class and gender compound each other as arenas of exclusion, in a complex and mutually-reinforcing relationship. The 1980s saw an increasing diversification of the gay rights movement in both Europe and North America, with lesbian and bisexual organisations tying feminist and gay liberation agendas, and claiming their place in a hitherto predominantly male field (Armstrong 2002, Martel 1999, Taylor and Whitter 1992). With the advent of the HIV/AIDS crisis later that decade, these agendas took a further radical turn when activist groups like the American ACT UP introduced a strong emphasis on direct action and focused on the pharmaceutical corporations keeping HIV medication at unreachable prices (Shepard and Heyduk 2002, Edelman 1993). These dynamics were carried forward under the umbrella of Queer Nation, founded in summer 1990, which emphasised diversity and the inclusion of all sexual minorities. By the mid-1990s, queer women and men of colour had founded their own organisations and were structuring their struggles explicitly around the intersections of racism, heterosexism, patriarchy and class.

In addition to creating linkages in theory and practice between different forms of domination, another type of linkage was that between the issues around which social movements were rallying, pointing beyond specific grievances and towards a more basic critique of social structures. The simultaneous rise in recent decades of multiissue movements campaigning on diverse agendas — economic justice, peace, feminism, ecology — was accompanied by linkages among these agendas which mitigated what would otherwise have been a fragmentation of political energies, and provided platforms for solidarity and cooperation on the ground. Movements progressively came to see the interdependence of their agendas, manifest along various axes such as ecological critiques of capitalism, feminist anti-militarism, and the interrelation of racial and economic segregation. Special importance must be given in this respect to ecological movements, whose agenda — by its very nature encompassing the entire spectrum of interaction between society and the natural environment — supplied it with a cross-cutting perspective that inevitably touched on multiple social, economic and ideological spheres.

At the same time, movements came to endorse some kind of a "theoretical pluralism" which disemphasised unity of analysis as a measure of appropriate political affiliation, which and contributed to the possibility of diverse ad-hoc coalitions. This was perhaps the result of the intriguing circumstance whereby several movements simultaneously purported to provide overarching,

totalising perspectives as a vantage point for their analysis and action, as in the case of certain strands feminism, radical or “deep” ecology, and post-war developments of Marxism such as Italian autonomist theory. The rise of such paradoxically “competing holisms” and their own versions of the sources of the world’s problems (patriarchy, industrialism and/or anthropocentrism, continuing class divisions etc.) sometimes led to entrenchment and unwillingness to acknowledge other viewpoints. In other cases, however, movements turned away from aiming at a single analysis and towards a “theoretical pluralism” that was prepared to accord equal legitimacy to diverse perspectives and narratives of struggle. This displaced theoretical unity in favour of a bottom-up approach to social theorising, valorising articulations of oppression that take place from within the specificities of each site thereof.

Finally, we should mention the strong links between the new anarchism and social spaces in the western subculture. Throughout the 20th century anarchist ideas had attracted subcultural and artistic movements such as Dada, Surrealism and the Beats. Since the 1960s, this attraction took on a much larger scale with the advent of the “counterculture” phenomenon. Many students of social movements point to counterculture as “providing the mulch in which the seeds of radical protest are germinated and nurtured” (Plows 1998:140. cf. McKay 1996, Hetherington 1998, Martin 2000). The “punk” subculture shares an oppositional attitude to mainstream society, and thus an affiliation with more than just anarchist symbolism (O’Connor 2003). Radical environmental groups such as *Earth First!* borrow from many “spiritual” traditions including paganism, Buddhism, and various New Age and Native American spiritualities. Under the auspices of these orientations, militancy can come to be framed as a willingness to defend what is “sacred”, helping to consolidate one variant of the mythologies that hold political cultures together (cf. Taylor 2002). An especially interesting integration of cultural production and political resistance was displayed by the British group *Reclaim the Streets* (RTS). Fusing the environmental direct action movement’s anti-roads/anti-car agenda and the recently-criminalised rave subculture of the early 1990s, RTS began organising illegal street parties that rendered vast areas car-free for the day, maintaining self-organised “temporary autonomous zones” which inaugurated the combination of party and protest that would go on to characterise mass mobilisations in subsequent years (McKay 1998, cf. Feral Faun 2001). Besides initiating multiple spaces of alternative cultural and social reproduction — from communes and squats to festivals and ‘zines — subcultures also provided radical activism with a more rooted social base from which to operate, replacing the declining position of traditional working class communities in this role.

An International Movement

While the processes leading up to the mid-nineties are very difficult to portray in more than cursory terms, the last decade offers us a much clearer picture of the context in which anarchist tendencies have developed. The reason for this is that unlike previous decades, the recent one has seen for the first time the emergence of a global network of resistance, in which struggles of an anarchist bend have enjoyed unprecedented connectivity and opportunities for mutually transforming crossfertilisation. Initially mobilising against neoliberal economic globalisation, this global network would soon encompass a much broader and more radical set of agendas, resulting in today’s so-called “movement of movements” in which a new anarchism is finally congealing into recognisable form.

On New Year's Day 1994, a rebellion of Indigenous peasants erupted in Chiapas, Mexico's southernmost and poorest state. Undertaken by the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (EZLN), the rebellion coincided with the coming into effect of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This agreement would lead Mexico to accept, as a condition for loans, "Structural Adjustment Programs" that would include land privatisation (including a constitutional amendment revoking the protected status of indigenous communal lands or *ejidos*), deep cuts in social spending, and a flooding of Mexico with imported corn and maize that would ruin local producers. Moreover, the Mexican government signing NAFTA was effectively a single-party dictatorship, with the Partido Revolucionario Institutional (PRI) holding power since 1929. Articulating as their chief aim, at the time, the overthrow of the PRI government and its replacement with a democratically elected one (EZLN 1993), some 2,000 guerrillas, supported by the local population, occupied San Cristobal de las Casas and six other towns in the Chiapas highlands. Under the slogan *¡Ya Basta!* ("enough already!"), they fought furious gun battles with government soldiers for 12 days before being driven into the mountains. Negotiations began soon afterwards, but the Zapatista communities rejected the loosely defined agreements. In February 1995, the new president Ernesto Zedillo launched a large military offensive against the EZLN, but talks resumed later that year, ending with the signing of the San Andres Accords, which gave indigenous peoples the right to govern themselves in autonomous communities within Mexico. The government, however, reneged on its signature and the EZLN suspended talks. This was followed by a campaign of intimidation of Zapatista communities by the Mexican Army and pro-government paramilitaries. On December 22, 1997 paramilitaries entered the refugee community of Acteal and killed 45 people, most of them women and children. In June 1998 two more massacres occurred. In March of 1999 the Zapatistas held an international indigenous rights *Consulta* (illegal referendum), in which 3 million Mexicans from Mexico, the US, and elsewhere around the world voted in a large majority for the implementation of the accords. With the defeat of the PRI in 2000, new president and ex-Coca Cola executive Vicente Fox declared he would solve the conflict in Chiapas "in 15 minutes". The Zapatistas demanded to make their case for implementation of the San Andres accords in person at the Mexican legislature, along with the Indigenous National Congress. The resulting *ZapaTour*, which entered Mexico City on the 11th of March, was greeted along the roads and in plazas by hundreds of thousands. The Mexican congress, however, refused to hear the Zapatistas, and reforming the San Andres accords passed the diluted "Indigenous Rights Bill". This was rejected by the Zapatistas, continuing the struggle of the indigenous communities (Holloway and Peláez 1998, Campa Mendoza 1999, Marcos 2001).

The Zapatista struggle initiated a process that would extend far beyond Mexico. This happened in two major ways: first, a consolidation of international networks of struggle for which the EZLN was, in part, directly responsible; second, the introduction (chiefly through the writings of the EZLN's major spokesman, Subcomandante Marcos) of a new form of internationalist discourse emphasising diversity, autonomy and solidarity. Resistance to NAFTA before its signing had already created coalitions of several hundred grassroots groups in Mexico, the United States and Canada, and newly available electronic means made their communication more rapid than ever before (Brooks and Fox 2002). The anti-NAFTA network also connected very diverse struggles throughout the continent — peasants, farmers, industrial labourers, environmental, human rights and social justice groups — overcoming their previous disjunction. Thus is it easy to understand why solidarity with the Zapatistas spread like wildfire among anti-NAFTA groups. Much has been made of the Zapatistas' use of the Internet to spread their communiques and

create ties of solidarity with groups in and outside Mexico (Cleaver 1998, Midnight Notes 2001). But even more important in terms of network-building was was their subsequent hosting of an "International Encuentro Against Neoliberalism and for Humanity" in Chiapas in 1996. The call for the meeting was addressed "To all individuals, groups, collectives, movements, social, civic and political organizations, neighborhood associations, cooperatives, all the lefts known and to be known; nongovernmental organizations, groups in solidarity with struggles of the world people, bands, tribes, intellectuals, indigenous people, students, musicians, workers, artists, teachers, peasants, cultural groups, youth movements, alternative communication media, ecologists, tenants, lesbians, homosexuals, feminists, pacifists" (EZLN 1996).

"Against the international of terror representing neoliberalism", the Zapatistas wrote, "we must raise the international of hope. Hope, above borders, languages, colours, cultures, sexes, strategies, and thoughts, of all those who prefer humanity alive. The international of hope. Not the bureaucracy of hope, not the opposite image and, thus, the same as that which annihilates us. Not the power with a new sign or new clothing. A breath like this, the breath of dignity". In July of 1996, over 3,000 people from five continents met at five sites in Chiapas. The discussion at each site was dedicated to a different topic: politics, economics, culture and media, civil society, and identity and community. One common theme that arose from the workshops was the need to develop a "network of struggles" to combat neoliberalism and build alternatives to it. Attendants of the *Encuentro* were able to draw parallels between the various processes of neoliberal globalisation which were sweeping the continents, whose primary aspects are well familiar by now: privatisation, cuts in social spending, aggregation of production at the hands of multinational corporations, disregard for environmental protection, cultural homogenisation, occupational precariousness etc. Not only were these processes of encroachment happening on a global scale, so were the seeds of resistance to them. Recognising this, the Zapatistas' closing remarks at the *Encuentro* called for the creation of an intercontinental network of resistance which, "recognising differences and acknowledging similarities, will search to find itself with other resistances around the world. [It] will be the medium in which distinct resistances may support one another. [It] doesn't have a central head or decision maker; it has no central command or hierarchies. We are the network, all of us who resist" (EZLN 1997). A Second Encuentro was held a year later in Spain, with nearly 4,000 participants from Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Oceania (PGA 1997). The following year, representatives of these movements met in Geneva to launch the ongoing network, named Peoples' Global Action.

PGA is quite a unique and paradoxical animal in the social movement field. With no membership, material resources or centralised structures, it represents an attempt to create a network that combines global scope and local autonomy, high effectiveness in action and thorough decentralisation in structure. Yet it is precisely this set-up which has enabled the groups who undertook the PGA banner — as distant and diverse as Indian peasants, Dutch squatters and Maori indigenous-rights activists — to cooperate in organising the "global days of action" up to and including Seattle which effectively re-ignited the present, post-Cold War cycle of anti-capitalist resistance and brought local struggles into mutual awareness and solidarity. Initially directed at the World Trade Organisation, which was seen as the primary forum for implementing the neoliberal agenda, the global days of action began with the WTO's Second Ministerial Conference in Geneva, in late May 1998. This day saw over 200 different protests and direct actions around the world, including half a million people demonstrating in Hyderabad, India. Activists in some 20 cities from Sydney to Tel- Aviv organised "Global Street Parties" inspired by the actions of

RTS in Britain. In Brazil the anti-WTO march was accompanied by the looting supermarkets and government food stores by landless peasants, while in in Geneva itself ten thousand people attended a protest that included attacks on banks and a McDonald's outlet.

The protest events of June 18th 1999, during the G8 summit in Cologne, took place in well over 100 cities and 40 countries. In the City of London the J18 actions caused millions of pounds in economic damage to corporate and financial institutions. PGA had its second global conference in Bangalore that August, hosted by an Indian farmers' union known for torching genetically modified crops. Here the next global day of action was coordinated, to coincide with the WTO meeting in Seattle.

On November 30, 1999, the opening ceremonies of the third ministerial of the World Trade Organization were successfully blockaded by 15,000 people taking direct action. Thousands of labour union members broke out of their 50,000-strong permitted march, and joined students, environmentalists, people of faith, and local citizens in resisting the hegemony of the WTO despite massive police attack. At night, local youth joined anarchists in attacks on corporate property, evading the police for hours. "The next day the streets were patrolled by the National Guard, and a 'no-protest zone' was invented by the mayor, yet thousands took to the streets again, over 600 were arrested, and the tear gas and plastic bullets continued to fly. The ministerial ended in failure, as Southern delegates, taking encouragement from the streets, declared the proceedings exclusionary" (Notes from Nowhere 2004:204–8). The events in Seattle, according to Jeff Juris (2004:111),

> not only energized processes of networking and convergence around the world, it provided a new model for organizing highly confrontational, mass-mediated direct action protests and counter-summits against multilateral financial and political institutions. Before the anti-WTOprotests had even concluded, plans were in the works for the next big action against the World Bank and IMF in Washington, D.C. the following April 16, while European activists were already talking about how to respond to the World Bank and IMF fall meetings scheduled for Prague on September 26…Over the next few years, this virtual web would expand and become physically embodied through a series of mass actions.

Although there has been much intramural criticism of the "summit-hopping" habits of some activists, and a consequent realisation of the need to ground resistance in local action and alternative-building, the importance of the "days of action" cycle between Seattle and Genoa cannot be ignored. Not only it they enact a radicalisation of political discourses in mainstream society that has survived to the post-S11 world; it is also through the embodied and virtual networks of the now-global direct action movement that the key cultural codes identified in the previous chapter as material to contemporary anarchism were transmitted, recombined and absorbed by local groups. This collective process of re-articulating a shared political identity through cultural proliferation, and the forging of concrete solidarities during action and discussion, represent the "coming together" of the contemporary anarchist movement.

Chapter 3: What Anarchists Want

The Logic of Anti-Authoritarian Political Language

> "Utopa is on the horizon", says Fernando Birri. "I take two steps towards it, and it retreats two steps. I walk ten steps and the horizon moves ten steps further. However much I walk, I will never reach it. What then is utopia for? It is for this: for walking".
>
> Eduardo Galeano, *Las Palabras Andantes* (Montevideo 1993)

This chapter focuses on the analysis of the third aspect of anarchist political culture — on the political language and discourse that demarcate anarchism as an ideology. The task here is to clarify the mental mappings that observably prevail among anarchists, investigating the substance of some of the "keywords" (Williams 1983) that feature in their oral and written debate, and the way in which different keywords are positioned in relation to one another. There are, I suggest, three key lenses under which ideational features of anarchism can be usefully considered. The first is a discussion of the term "domination", clarifying how anarchists construct what they object to in society. The second is a look at the ideas associated with "direct action" and "prefigurative politics", which express anarchists' thinking about their own activities. The third is a discussion of contemporary anarchism's "open-ended" conception of politics and its detachment from any notion of a "post-revolutionary resting point".

In their activist capacity, anarchists employ keywords like "domination" or "direct action" as cultural signifiers, which in turn function as hyperlinks to broader semantic fields. This facilitates the expression of ideas in the public sphere, and the establishment of markers for common ground among activists themselves. Hence, inasmuch as anarchism is being spoken of in terms of ideas, it should be remembered that in doing so one is performing an act of extrapolation from cultural codes, one which suggests certain ways to phrase and conceptualise the much more intuitive and experiential constituents of anarchist discourse. Hence two additional agendas are brought into play. First, this ideational apparatus is related to features of anarchist praxis reviewed in the first chapter. Second, the analysis will investigate some of the "surplus of meaning" (Ricoeur 1976) that activists generate in discourse — implications of ideological utterances of which the participants may not be fully aware.

Struggle Against Domination

Anarchism is widely understood as encompassing a rejection of both the state and capitalism. This observation holds true now as before, but it no longer remains a sufficient description. The rootedness of contemporary anarchism in radical feminist, indigenous and queer struggles, which I explored in the previous chapter, has led it, in its re-emergence, to be attached to a more generalised discourse of resistance. A century ago the struggles against patriarchy and racism,

for example, were relatively minor concerns for most anarchists — yet they are now widely accepted as an integral part of the anarchist agenda. Furthermore, it is now widely understood in the radical community that these objectionable features about society cannot be subsumed under an analysis that is limited to a critique of the state-capitalist apparatus: these are social dynamics which are generated, reproduced and enacted within *and* outside this apparatus. As a result of the integration of such struggles into the political horizon of anarchism, its discourse of resistance now overwhelmingly gravitates around a new concept, that of *domination.*

The word domination occupies a central place in anarchist political language. It is, for anarchists, the paradigm governing micro- and macro-political relations, maintained through the "reproduction of everyday life" (Perlman 1992/1969). Domination is not a value, like freedom or equality or solidarity — it is a disvalue, what anarchists want to negate. The word serves as a generic concept for the various systematic features of society whereby groups and persons are controlled, coerced, exploited, humiliated, discriminated against, etc. — all of which dynamics anarchists seek to uncover, challenge and erode. The function of the concept of domination, as anarchists construct it, is to express the encounter with a *family resemblance* among the entire ensemble of such social dynamics, or, more precisely, among the articulations of these dynamics by those who struggle against them. In using the idea of a "family resemblance" I am drawing on Ludwig Wittgenstein's later account of the operation of language. According to Wittgenstein, the general concepts we use do not possess any necessary and sufficient conditions for their definition. Rather, the items that we place under a general heading are related to one another by a set of partial overlaps, through the possession of common characteristics. Not all of the members of a family possess the entire set of such characteristics. However, our cognition operates in such a way that a continuity is established between them — in the same way we can "tell" that someone is her father's daughter (Wittgenstein 1953:§§65–7). Understood as expressing the encounter with a family resemblance among different social dynamics, the term domination draws attention to the multiplicity of partial overlaps between different experiences that are struggled against, constructing a general category that has the sole purpose of maintaining a correspondence between experiences which remain grounded in their own particular realities. The term domination thus remains inclusive of the myriad articulation of forms of oppression, exclusion and control by those subject to them, at countless individual and collective sites of resistance.

It should be clarified, then, that on the brute level of analysing political discourse, domination is a tailor-made concept. What exists in reality is a multitude of concrete experiences of exploitation, humiliation and discrimination in which the protagonists are individual human beings. In their concrete form, as constituents of these individuals' biographies, these experiences are not by any measure preintegrated into an overarching category. It is important to stress the constructed nature of the concept of domination, in the same way that most concepts that describe reality politically are discursive tools that are created in the service of some political end. In the present post-structuralist theoretical climate, anarchists have absorbed to a significant degree the critique of universal vantage points and concepts and the way in which these tend to service power relations in society. But the flip-side of this is having no qualms in admitting this position about their own concepts and categories, which are also constructed — albeit in the service of resistance.

In this sense, anarchism can be seen to incorporate the emphasis on multiple, overlapping and mutually-reinforcing sites of domination encountered in the argumentation of radical feminist, ecological, queer, anti-colonial and workers' movements, while explicitly pointing to their commonality in terms of the *generic* dynamic of oppression. This does not, of course, imply that

the same mechanisms feature in all of these relations, nor that they operate in identical ways. Nevertheless, it is the discursive move of *naming* domination which enables anarchists to transcend specific antagonisms towards the generalised resistance that they promote. If there is one distinct starting point for anarchist approach, it is this act of naming. The systematic nature of domination may be expressed in reference to a number of overarching "forms", "systems" or (I would suggest) *regimes* of domination, of which patriarchy, white supremacy and wage labour are prominent examples.[1] The reference to "regimes of domination" has the strength of capturing the more general target of anarchist resistance these days, while remaining in contact with the traditional anarchist refusal of "government". What anarchists refuse is not only this or the other government, but government in general — a word that can and should imply more than the state. One can easily speak of a worker being governed by his boss, or of a wife being governed by her husband (as some people used to do approvingly). This broader sense of government is what I mean by a "regime" — an impersonal set of rules regulating relationships between people, rules which are not autonomously constituted by those individuals placed within the relationship (including the dominating side). Regimes of domination are the overarching context that conditions people's socialisation and background assumptions about social norms, explaining why people *fall into* certain patterns of behaviour and have expectations that contribute to the perpetuation of dominatory relations. Because of their compulsory nature, regimes of domination are also something that one cannot just "opt out of" under normal circumstances. Women or non-white people encounter discrimination, access barriers and derogatory behaviour towards them throughout society, and cannot simply remove themselves from their fold or wish them away. The attempt to live outside them is already an act of resistance. As Bob Black (1994:33) expresses this, domination is nobody's fault, and everybody's:

> The "real enemy" is the totality of physical and mental constraints by which capital, or class society, or statism, or the society of the spectacle expropriates everyday life, the time of our lives. The real enemy is not an object apart from life. It is the organization of life by powers detached from it and turned against it. The apparatus, not its personnel, is the real enemy. But it is by and through the apparatchiks and everyone else participating in the system that domination and deception are made manifest. The totality is the organization of all against each and each against all. It includes all the policemen, all the social workers, all the office workers, all the nuns, all the op-ed columnists, all the drug kingpins from Medellin to Upjohn, all the syndicalists and all the situationists.

Human beings are not the authors of their fates. They are, in the anarchist mindset, "the dispossessed" — human beings trapped within lifeless impersonal institutions that they never shaped, and which form the context in which most of them have very little autonomy over their time, energy and thinking.

The relationship, implicit in contemporary in anarchist thinking, between the resistance to domination as social dynamic and the resistance to social institutions (broadly understood) can now be articulated more clearly. While what is resisted is, at the bottom of things, domination as

[1] The terms "patriarchy" and "white supremacy" are preferred here to "sexism" and "racism", because the reference to systemic features of social relations rather than to ideologies of bigotry.

a basic social dynamic, the resistance is seen to proceed through confrontation with the institutions through which this domination is administered. Anarchists think that institutions such as the state, the capitalist system of ownership and labour — and also institutions such as the family, the school and many forms of organised religion — are where the authoritarian, indoctrinary and disciplinary mechanisms which perpetuate domination-regimes are concretely *located*. Resistance to police repression or to the caging of refugees and illegal immigrants is more broadly directed towards the state as the source of policing or immigration policies. Act of resistance are, in the bearset sense, "anarchist" when they are perceived by the actor as particular actualisations of a more systemic opposition to such institutions.

I will return to domination in the next chapter, in a more analytical frame, during the discussion of power. Meanwhile, it can be pointed out that the preceding account of dominaition, as it is discursively constructed by anarchists, enriches our understanding of their action repertoires and broader "strategic" orientations to social struggle. A "family" concept like domination reflects anarchists' commitments to decentralisation in the process of resistance. It is widely believed among anarchists that struggles against domination are at their most informed, powerful and honest when undertaken by those who are placed within those dynamics (clearly it is possible for men to struggle against patriarchy, for white folk to resist racism, etc.). Strategically this translates into the anarchist refrain that "the only real liberation is self-liberation", grounding its rejection of paternalism and vanguards. Domination designates a family resemblance among different social dynamics, as those dynamics are expressed by those who struggle against them. But these dynamics continue to require expression from within the experiences of those situated within them. Thus the impulse to abolish domination is valorised in the diversity of its enactments. The tension between the specificity of dominations and the need to articulate them in common is reflected in the (often positive) tension between unity and diversity in the anarchist outlook on struggle — the anarchist movement itself being a network of autonomous resistances. The latter retain a privileged position in expressing their oppression and defining their struggles against it, but are also in constant communication, mutual aid and solidarity with each other.

Prefigurative politics

This leads us to consider the second qualifying feature of contemporary anarchism, prefigurative politics: the commitment to define and realise an anarchist trajectory *within* the collective structures and activities of the revolutionary movement. In addition to Buechler's definition in Chapter 3 (n.), the concept has also been defined as "the idea that a transformative social movement must necessarily anticipate the ways and means of the hoped-for new society" (Tokar 2003) or as anarchism‘s "commitment to overturning capitalism by only employing a strategy that is an embryonic representation of an anarchist social future" (Morland and Carter 2004:79), an "ingression of the future into the present" (Marcuse 1969:90–1). This type of endeavour is widely recognised as the primary reference point for how anarchist groups should function, as evident from an abundance of articulations to that effect in groups' and networks' "hallmarks" or "principles of unity", such as those of the Independent Media Centre network (IMC 2001):

> All Independent Media Centers recognize the importance of process to social change and are committed to the development of non-hierarchical and anti-authoritarian relationships, from interpersonal relationships to group dynamics.

Another example is from a local anarchist collective in the U.S. (Unbound, undated):

> We are anti-racist, anti-authoritarian, pro-queer, trans-inclusive, sex-positive, fat-positive and feminist. We don't believe in waiting until after the revolution. We believe that if you want a better world you should start acting like it now. That is why we choose to work within a nonhierarchical, anti-authoritarian structure. All decisions are made through consensus. There are no bosses. None of us wants to have a boss, and none of us wants to be a boss.

The widespread nature of such commitments allows us to view present-day anarchist formations as "explicit and conscious experiments, all ways of saying, 'We are not just saying No to capital, we are developing a different concept of politics, constructing a different set of social relations, pre-figuring the society we want to build'" (Holloway 2003). What is encountered here is a widespread endorsement of efforts to enact anarchist transformation not only in "society" but also in the "processes, structures, institutions, and associations we create right now, and how we live our lives" (Silverstein 2002).

I would suggest that the best way of understanding the idea of prefigurative politics is as an extension and universalisation of the anarchist concept of direct action. Direct action has been defined in Chapter 1 as action without intermediaries, whereby an individual or a group uses his/its own power and resources to change reality, according to his/its own desires. Anarchists understand direct action as a matter of taking social change into one's own hands, by intervening directly in a situation rather than appealing to an external agent (typically a government) for its rectification. Most commonly, direct action is viewed under its preventative or destructive guise. If people object, for instance, to the clear-cutting of a forest, then taking direct action means that rather than petitioning or engaging in a legal process, they would intervene literally to prevent the clear cutting — by chaining themselves to the trees, or pouring sugar into the gas-tanks of the bulldozers, or other acts of disruption and sabotage — their goal being to directly hinder or halt the project. However, it is also possible to talk about direct action in a constructive way. Thus, under the premise of direct action, anarchists who propose social relations bereft of hierarchy and domination undertake their construction by themselves.

One should further differentiate this reading of prefigurative politics as direct action from a reading of prefigurative politics as "propaganda by deed". Despite the ill repute gained by the latter term, which became narrowly associated with bombings and *attentats* (particularly in the last decades on the nineteenth century), propaganda by deed can be understood more broadly as pointing to the potentially exemplary nature of all anarchist action. On such an account, the most effective anarchist propaganda will always be the actual implementation and display of anarchist social relations — i.e. the practice of prefigurative politics. It is easier for people to engage with the idea that people can exist without bosses or leaders when such existence is displayed, if on a limited scale, in actual practice rather than merely argued for on paper. Thus Gandhi's assertion that "a reformer's business is to make the impossible possible by giving an ocular demonstration of the possibility in his own conduct" (Gandhi 1915). Under the banner of direct action, however, prefigurative politics can be seen as more than an accessory to revolutionary strategy. It appears, rather, as the core of the strategy itself — the means by which anarchist social relations are created. This helps understand the Zapatista formulation that the struggle is for "the conversion of dignity and rebellion into freedom and dignity" — dignity is the means, dignity the end, there is no distinction (EZLN 1994/5, Holloway and Peláez 1998).

A clear indication of the importance that anarchists attach to prefigurative politics is its decisive role in defining their solidarity and willingness to collaborate with nonanarchist movements. Anarchists are quite often found allied, on an ad-hoc or pretty regular basis, with self-organised movements of migrant workers, peasant associations, anti-militarist initiatives, campaigns against police brutality etc., which do not have an explicitly anarchist orientation. Such groups may have no radical critique of capitalism, entirely focus their work on a single issue, or limit their political agendas to reforms in particular institutions rather than seeking the type of social transformation that anarchists endorse. If one asks, however, why anarchists are more comfortable working with some non-anarchist groups rather than others, what one find is that the choice normally pivots on the internal process of these groups. It is their general trajectory towards leaderless, face-to-face methods of organisation, and their striving to transcend sexist or racist patterns among their own members, which in large part determine anarchists' solidarity and will to cooperate with them. This is not to say that anarchists won't surface their differences with such groups or question what they see as their limited perspectives — but once the basic comfort with their internal structures is in place, differences usually take the form of (sometimes heated) debates among allies, rather than calling into question the alliance itself. In a similar way, anarchists feel far less comfortable cooperating with large, bureaucratic NGOs who do not put a strong emphasis on horizontal internal structures, even if they do take quite a radical position on capitalism, promote a multi-issue analysis, or emphasise grassroots empowerment from the teeth outward.

The centrality of prefigurative politics to the worldview of present-day anarchists is impossible to overemphasise. The effort to create and develop horizontal functioning in any collective action setting, and to maintain a constant awareness of interpersonal dynamics and the way in which they might reflect social patterns of exclusion, are accorded just as much importance as planning and carrying out campaigns, projects and direct actions. In contemporary anarchist discourse, considerations of efficiency or unity are never alleged to justify a weakening of this emphasis. The development of non-hierarchical structures in which domination is constantly challenged is, for most anarchists, an end in itself.

The premises for prefigurative politics are normally set in terms of a desirable correspondence between anarchists' vision for a future society and their present-day praxis — between what anarchists think society ought to look like, and the equivalent aspects of how they organise and relate to each other in their own groups. There is, however, some room for theoretical clarification in terms of the perspectives that might be seen to ground such a view. Before explaining why this is so, let me note that this formulation is resistant to three of the immediate arguments that may be forwarded against it. First, despite the impressions that it might generate, prefigurative politics does not necessarily depend on the notion of a "postrevolutionary resting point", which the arguments offered at the end of this chapter will call into question. The reference to a hoped-for new society need not assume that such a society would be unchanging. The imagery in question retains its strength as long as one assumes a strong degree of qualitative difference between such a future society and the present one, for example in terms of the absence of key institutions like the state and the wage-labour system, or the widespread proliferation of experiments with libertarian social relations.

Second, the idea of prefigurative politics need not imply the objectionable requirement that the vision of a new society should constitute a detailed blueprint, or a "thick" account of prevalent social values and their corresponding institutional arrangements. Technically speaking, two

sets of the same number of attributes (in this case, those of the envisioned society and those of the movement) can correspond to varying degrees irrespective of the number of items being compared. How detailed one's vision is does not affect the measure to which our present activities can be said to correspond to it. Moreover, the correspondence in question can be thought of on entirely negative terms. Unlike the implications of Tokar's definition, one could also talk about a prefigurative politics which proceeds only with view to the features one thinks should *not* exist in a future society, and strives to avoid them in activist circles. What will "replace" these features (say, how people will relate to each other in the absence of sexism) can be seen as the locus of experimentation and development, about which nothing can be said in advance beyond the non-existence of whatever social feature anarchists reject.

Third and last, the idea does not necessarily imply a relationship between vision and praxis wherein the first is a constant and the second a variable. A more dialectical notion is also available, whereby the two are in a constant process of mutual definition, with experimentation in practice informing future visions and vice versa. Nevertheless, it is important to consider the precise terms on which anarchists understand their commitment to prefigurative politics. On a first reading, the issue might seem straightforward: it is a matter of being consistent, of "practising what you preach". It makes no sense to think one thing and do another. Yet such a straightforward interpretation is insufficient for interpreting anarchist commitments to prefigurative politics.

The questionable status of such an interpretation emerges from the observation that almost *any* movement or organisation which posits an agenda for social change can be seen to display such a consistency, in creating internal institutions and dynamics which reflect its social-change agenda. NGOs who promote referenda as a major tool for democratic renewal often use them in their own structures as well. They favour, for instance, procedures whereby all their members are consulted on, and vote to ratify, strategical campaigning decisions and key aspects of the organisation's functioning. Similarly, centre-left parties which advocate strong legislation on affirmative action almost invariably also encourage women, minorities and disabled people to apply for positions inside the party's political organs or its administration. In both cases, the measures are easily justifiable on the grounds of correspondence between vision and praxis. Of course, just because the application of a value is common doesn't mean that it shouldn't still be invoked. However, the point is that this is not a particularly interesting or inspiring value from a specifically anarchist perspective. To take a more extreme example: aren't some European neo-Fascists also "prefigurative" in their politics? Their organisations, after all, maintain strict hierarchies, "traditional" differences of role and status between men and women, a leader-herd mentality, exclusion of ethnic minorities and preservation of class inequalities. In other words, they are consciously made to embody their desired Fascist society. Does this fact add an iota of value to how anarchists view such groups, or make them less any objectionable for anarchists?

What this last example throws into sharp relief is that prefigurative politics, viewed strictly in terms of abstract consistency or "practising what you preach", can only with difficulty be thought of as an independent value for anarchists. The presence of such a consistency hardly makes a difference to our judgements if there is no pre-existent agreement on the vision/praxis continuum in question. Perhaps neo- Nazism is too provocative an example, so let us look at "progressive" groups by returning to the NGO case. I think it's safe to say that most anarchists do not believe that referenda are an idea worth putting much energy into, because of various critiques that stress their capability of being internalised into the functioning of the present system (e.g. referenda do not challenge the basic structure of the state, they are open to a great degree of manipulation

from above, and can become a tool for cooperation between elites — cf. Linder 1998, Mendelsohn and Parkin 2001). In the same way, anarchists would have no special reason to appreciate the fact that the members of an NGO vote on its strategic decisions, if the questions are still formulated by a standing committee or if there continues to obtain a distinction between directors and the rank-and-file membership. The correspondence between a certain vision and its holders' praxis does not amount to much if one rejects both.

In order to understand the significance of prefigurative politics, one must go beyond viewing it as a matter of abstract consistency. This can happen when this feature is considered within the terms of a particular discursive context, the only one in which consistency between vision and praxis can be posited as against a perspective that is said to *lack* it. The context in question is the ongoing antagonism between anarchists and authoritarian socialist currents, in particular those of the Leninist tradition. The reference to Leninism might sound like an antiquated preoccupation, but it is important to stress that the antagonism in question is still alive and well in the radical milieu. Leninist parties and their front-groups continue to maintain a very visible and manipulative presence in anti-capitalist and anti-war movements, and anarchists have found it necessary to confront them at almost every crossroads of resistance over the past decade (SchNEWS 2001, Munson 2002). In the context of this antagonism, anarchists have often forwarded arguments that are based on a felt rupture between vision and praxis in Leninists' political perspective. On the one hand, the argument goes, authoritarian socialists profess a vision of "pure communism" with no government, where people behave sociably "without force, without coercion, without subordination" (Lenin 1918). On the other hand, their praxis proceeds through top-down authoritarian structures, justified as the most efficient means for conquer the state which is subsequently supposed to "wither away" (but see Adamiak 1970). Note that what enables anarchists to posit their criticism of authoritarian socialism along such lines is the tacit assumption of a unity of visions, or of ultimate ends, among themselves and the Leninists. This tacit assumption is what generates the possibility of invoking prefigurative politics as a value. While the foregoing analysis shows that prefigurative politics is in general quite a trivial matter, it is the *lack* of such a feature in Leninism that draws anarchists to emphasise its existence in their own movement. This type of argumentative manoeuvre can be seen to go back as early as the first anarchist criticisms of authoritarian socialism. We encounter it in Bakunin's assertion that the Marxists contradict themselves by saying that "Anarchism or freedom is the goal, the State or dictatorship is the means" (Bakunin 1873:179), and in Berkman's insistence that Marx and Engels "taught that Anarchism would come from Socialism. They said that we must first have Socialism, but that after Socialism there will be Anarchism, and that it would be a freer and more beautiful condition of society to live in than Socialism" (Berkman 1929).

Placing the focus on prefigurative politics in its proper context of the adversity between anarchists and the otherwise-statist revolutionary left is important for another reason. It allows us to approach the entire issue from a different angle, since in the context of this controversy prefigurative politics turns out to *not* be a matter of abstract consistency, but rather a value of *strategica* nature. This, I believe, is a more attractive motivational grounding for such a perspective. What the strategical interpretation of prefigurative politics says is that the correspondence between vision and praxis is necessary in order to achieve revolutionary objectives. In the context of the critique of authoritarian socialism, the charge is that such revolutionary organs fail to achieve their visions — i.e. pure communism, which for present purposes we can accept is identical to anarchist goals — *because* of the disconnection between such visions and the methods and strate-

gies used to approach them. On such an account, the failure of all historical attempts to reach anarchy/communism by way of a vanguard socialist party are not due to the shortcomings of particular individuals (Lenin, Mao, Castro), nor to the adverse "objective" circumstances in which such attempts were made and which led them to "degenerate" (cf. Castoriadis 1964). Rather, anarchists claim that these attempts were doomed from the start due to the separation between the revolutionary process and its desired results, a separation which resides in the uncritical reproduction of authoritarian and bureaucratic structures within the revolutionary movement. This is not a matter of practising what one preaches for the sake of it, but because strategical arguments about the appropriate revolutionary path.

One cannot build a revolutionary movement along such lines and expect that they will not emerge as a decisive conditioning factor for the entire project of social transformation. The moment one focuses merely on the seizure of state power, and maintains authoritarian organisation for that purpose while leaving the construction of a free society for "after the revolution", the road has already been closed. Nobody perhaps has expressed this idea more forcefully than Emma Goldman (1925), writing in explicit criticism of the Bolshevik *coup-d'etat*:

> All human experience teaches that methods and means cannot be separated from the ultimate aim. The means employed become, through individual habit and social practice, part and parcel of the final purpose; they influence it, modify it, and presently the aims and means become identical…No revolution can ever succeed as a factor of liberation unless the *means* used to further it be identical in spirit and tendency with the *purposes* to be achieved…the period of theactual revolution, the so-called transitory stage, must be the introduction, the prelude to the new social conditions…it must be of the spirit of the new life, harmonious with the construction of the new edifice…revolution is in vain unless inspired by its ultimate ideal. Revolutionary methods must be in tune with revolutionary aims. The means used to further the revolution must harmonize with its purposes. In short, the ethical values which the revolution is to establish in the new society must be *initiated* with the revolutionary activities of the so-called transitional period. The latter can serve as a real and dependable bridge to the better life only if built of the same material as the life to be achieved.

Viewed against the backdrop of such criticisms, the strategic perspective on prefigurative politics initially takes on the guise of a negative or defensive stance: authoritarian structures are to be avoided in order to *prevent* the failures associated with revolutionary projects which contain them. However, the strategic perspective also has a positive or proactive aspect. Efforts to develop non-hierarchical organising can be seen as the "constructive" aspect of anarchist direct action. On this view, the pursuit of prefigurative politics is an inseparable aspect of the anarchist project in that the collectives, communes and networks in which they are involved today are themselves the groundwork for the realities that will replace the present society. Collectively-run grassroots projects are, on this account, the seeds of a future society "within the shell of the old". This orientation is close to Gustav Landauer's statement:

> One can throw away a chair and destroy a pane of glass; but…[only] idle talkers…regard the state as such a thing or as a fetish that one can smash in order to

destroy it. The state is a condition, a certain relationship among human beings, a mode of behavior between men; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently toward one another…We are the state, and we shall continue to be the state until we have created the institutions that form a real community and society" (Landauer 1910).

If this is the case, then for social change to be successful, the modes of organisation that will replace capitalism, the state, gendered divisions of labour and so on need to be prepared alongside (though not instead of) the attack on present institutions. If people want a society that is characterised by non-hierarchical cooperation and the erosion of dominatory institutions and behaviours, and if such a society is believed to directly proceed from the realities that present-day movements develop, then clearly the current movement should strive towards non-hierarchical forms which will be carried forward as such realities proliferate. "The very process of building an anarchist movement from below is viewed as the process of consociation, self-activity and self-management that must ultimately yield that revolutionary self that can act upon, change and manage an authentic society" (Bookchin 1980).

So much for the strategic aspect. There is, however, another and perhaps even stronger way for accounting for the anarchist drive towards a prefigurative politics of direct action. This consists in what can be called an individualist motivation (referring to the individualist aspect of *all* anarchism). I think most anarchists will agree that the point of their struggles is not only to help bring about social transformation along anarchist lines, but also to liberate themselves to the greatest degree possible. On such a reading, the motivation for anarchists to engage in a prefigurative politics lies simply in their desire to *inhabit* liberated social relations, whatever strategical advantages that also has. In the words of U.S. anarchist publishing collective CrimethInc. (2001),

> Our revolution must be an immediate revolution in our daily lives; anything else is not a revolution but a demand that once again people do what they do not want to do and hope that this time, somehow, the compensation will be enough. Those who assume, often unconsciously, that it is impossible to achieve their own desires — and thus, that it is futile to fight for themselves — often end up fighting for an ideal or cause instead. But it is still possible to fight for ourselves, or at least the experiment must be worth a try; so it is crucial that we seek change not in the name of some doctrine or grand cause, but on behalf of ourselves, so that we will be able to live more meaningful lives. Similarly we must seek first and foremost to alter the contents of our own lives in a revolutionary manner, rather than direct our struggle towards world-historical changes which we will not live to witness. In this way we will avoid the feelings of worthlessness and alienation that result from believing that it is necessary to "sacrifice oneself for the cause", and instead live to experience the fruits of our labors…in our labors themselves.

In a similar vein, Terrence Hodgson (undated) comments:

> The revolution is now, and we must let the desires we have about the future manifest themselves in the here and now as best as we can. When we start doing that, we stop fighting for some abstract condition for the future and instead start fighting to see those desires realized in the present. Through this process we start pushing back

> the veil of submission and domination towards the periphery of our lives, we start reclaiming control over our own lives…Whether the project is a squat, a sharing of free food, an act of sabotage, a pirate radio station, a periodical, a demonstration, or an attack against one of the institutions of domination, it will not be entered into as a political obligation, but as a part of the life one is striving to create, as a flowering of one's self-determined existence.

This interpretation also lends itself to be integrated into the illegalist / insurrectionist / eminently possibilist stream of anarchism, which is prominent in Italy and Greece and has made cross-overs form to the U.S. (cf. Bonanno 1998, Anonymous 8 2001). On such reading, personal liberation and the confrontation with a homogenising and oppressive social order can each be seen to supply the other's motivation. Thus on the one hand, it is the individual's own experience of their restriction within the administered world, of their position of subjugation along multiple axes of domination, and of the coercive apparatus monitoring every disobedient crossroads, that supplies a direct impulse for taking action to make things otherwise. On the other hand, confrontation or construction is by itself a site of liberation since it offers the individual an opportunity to discover and express their own distinctiveness and potentialities, as well as to explore qualitatively different, antagonistic social spaces (Landstreicher 2001):

> One's projectuality becomes explicitly insurrectional and anarchist when one recognizes that self-determination has to go hand in hand with destructive attack against all authority, every institution of power and every form of social control…anarchy is not a cause to which one sacrifices oneself, but the necessary practice of self-realization in the present world. We fight exploitation and domination, because we do not want to be exploited or ruled. Our selfish generosity recognizes that our own self-realization can only be completed in a world in which every individual has equal access to all that he or she needs to realize her or himself as a singular being — thus, the necessity to destroy all authority, the entire social order, in order to open the possibility of everything life can offer.

In terms of the ideological development of anarchism, this reframing of anarchist goals in terms of directly experienced domination and liberation represents a revival of anarchist individualism, which is now articulated in the present tense rather than as a principle for a future society.

Open — Ended Politics

The third and final qualifying feature of contemporary anarchism is its openended tendency, one that eschews the rhetoric of a post-revolutionary resting point. In this final section I argue that such a tendency is sustainable, and examine its implications for anarchist concepts of social transformation.

Anarchists by and large no longer tend to understand revolution, if they even use the term, as a horizon event but as an ongoing process. This is opposed to traditional anarchism's political imaginary which unmistakably included the notion of revolution as an event, a moment of large scale qualitative change in social life. Bakunin (1866) spoke of "a universal, worldwide revolution…[the] formidable reactionary coalition can be destroyed only by the greater power of

the simultaneous revolutionary alliance and action of all the people of the civilized world". It is certainly true that anarchists carried this view of revolution one step away from gross millenarianism, by insisting that the revolutionary horizon can be and was traversed during exceptional moments. The Spanish Revolution of 1936 and the French May 1968 uprisings are the most obvious examples of events that were interpreted by anarchists in this way, with their transience and localisation doing nothing to diminish their qualitative significance (cf. Bookchin 1994, Gregorie and Perlman 1970). Still, these were exceptional moments. The ultimate failure of these events and the deterioration of rare revolutionary "successes" into authoritarian nightmares debased the coin of Revolution for anarchist movement. With the re-emergence of anarchism in recent decades, the revolutionary horizon has become more and more attracted into the present tense, culminating in its complete absorption as a potential dimension of everyday life. Colin Ward's focus on everyday interactions without hierarchy and alienation (Ward 1973), and the many Situationist-influenced explorations of an anarchist micropolitics of resistance and reconstruction in daily life, are prominent contributions to this process.

The focus on the present tense — connected to the understanding of prefigurative politics offered above — was expressed with increasing strength by anarchists throughout the twentieth century. Often, this was done in relation to an open-ended tendency that eschewed the rhetoric of a post-revolutionary resting point for the anarchist project. For Landauer (1911:107), "anarchism is not a thing of the future, but of the present; not a matter of demands but of living". For Rocker (1938),

> Anarchism is no patent solution for all human problems, no Utopia of a perfect social order, as it has so often been called, since on principle it rejects all absolute schemes and concepts. It does not believe in any absolute truth, or in definite final goals for human development, but in an unlimited perfectibility of social arrangements and human living conditions, which are always straining after higher forms of expression, and to which for this reason one can assign no definite terminus nor set any fixed goal.

Now Rocker bases his stance, on the one hand, on the refusal of absolutes, and on the other on the assertion that social arrangements display an inherent proclivity for change. For him, however, the change in question is regarded in optimistic terms — a free society tends towards improvement, which cannot be limited in scope. What I want to do now is to offer two different arguments, of a more pessimistic character, which I think substantiate the open-ended stance that animates the contemporary anarchist movement. Both arguments conclude that even the most thorough realisation of anarchist social goals does not mean the culmination of the anarchist project.

It should be clarified that the pessimism of these arguments is *not* related to the oft-forwarded claims that anarchism is impossible due to an inherently selfish, competitive and/or malevolent human nature. To this anarchists need only reply with their own familiar arguments, referring to the complexity of human beings and to the importance of social relations for shaping our behaviour and selfhood, as well as inyour- face "state of nature" arguments drawing on anthropological evidence to the effect that hunter-gatherer societies display anarchic social relations (Sahlins 1971). However, by invoking an inherent instability of individual human behaviour, or by anticipating a constant flux of relationships between diverse and decentralised communities,

anarchists are in fact also denying their project the possibility of millenarian stability. Here the first pessimistic argument can be forwarded: it is impossible to be sure that even under whatever conditions anarchists would consider as most fruitful to sociability and cooperation, some individuals and groups might not successfully renew patterns of exploitation and domination in society. This type of argument has long been evaded by many anarchists, who have endorsed the expectation inspired by Kropotkin, that a revolution in social, economic and political conditions would encourage an essentially different patterning of human behaviour — either because it would now be able to flower freely under nurturing conditions, or because revolution would remove all hindrances to the development of human beings' cooperative / egalitarian / benevolent side.

Others, however, have heeded the warning and internalised it to a certain extent. Let me look at two examples of recent anarchist-inspired works which have done so. The first is Ursula Le Guin's novel *The Dispossessed*, perhaps the most honest attempt at portraying a functioning anarchist society — since the society it deals with is far from perfect or unproblematic. The protagonist, Shevek, is driven to leave his anarchist society on the moon of Anarres, not because he rejects its core anarchist ideals but because he sees that some of them are no longer adequately reflected in practice, while others need to be revised in order to give more place to individuality. In the hundred and seventy years since its establishment, following the secession of a mass of revolutionary anarchists from the home-planet of Urras, Anarresti society has witnessed the growth of xenophobia, informal hierarchies in the administrative syndicates, and an apparatus of social control through custom and peer pressure. All of these contribute to a conformity that hinders Shevek's self-realisation in his pursuit of his life project, the development of a groundbreaking approach in theoretical physics. Shevek embodies the continuing importance of dissent even after the abolition of capitalism and government. Through his departure and founding of the Syndicate of Initiative, he becomes a revolutionary within the revolution and initiates change within the anarchist society (Le Guin 1974:316):

> "It was our purpose all along — our Syndicate, this journey of mine — to shake up things, to stir up, to break some habits, to make people ask questions. To behave like anarchists!"

Shevek's project renews the spirit of dissent and non-conformism that animated the original creation of the anarchist society on Anarres in the first place. As Raymond Williams observes, this dynamic portrays *The Dispossessed* as "an open utopia: forced open, after the congealing of ideals, the degeneration of mutuality into conservatism; shifted, deliberately, from its achieved harmonious condition, the stasis in which the classical utopian mode culminates, to restless, open, risk-taking experiment" (Williams 1978). Utopia, in this sense, does not mean a "perfect" society (as Rocker uses the term) but social relations that are qualitatively different and better.

A similar open utopia is the vision of an alternative society forwarded in the book *bolo'bolo* by the Zurich-based author P.M.. This book not only acknowledges but treasures the type of instability and diversity of social relations that can be ushered in by the removal of all external control on the behaviour of individuals and groups. The world anti-system called *bolo'bolo* is a mosaic in which every community (*bolo*) of around five hundred residents is as nutritionally self-sufficient as possible, and has complete autonomy to define its ethos or "flavour" (*nima*). Stability is afforded by a minimal but universal social contract (*sila*), enforced by reputation and

interdependence (P.M. 1985:68–70). This contract guarantees, for example, that every individual (*ibu*) can at any time leave their native *bolo*, and is entitled to one day's rations (*yalu*) and housing (*gano*), as well as to medical treatment (*bete*), at any *bolo*. It even suggests a duel code (*yaka*) to solve disputes. However,

> There are no humanist, liberal or democratic laws or rules about the content of *nimas* and there is no State to enforce them. Nobody can prevent a *bolo* from committing mass suicide, dying of drug experiments, driving itself into madness or being unhappy under a violent regime. *Bolos* with a bandit-nima could terrorize whole regions or continents, as the Huns or Vikings did. Freedom and adventure, generalized terrorism, the law of the club, raids, tribal wars, vendettas, plundering — everything goes. (77–8)

While most anarchists might not want to go that far, the point here is that any anarchist theory which acknowledges the absence of law and authority must also respond to the possibility of a re-emergence of patterns of domination within and/or among communities, even if at a certain point in time they have been consciously overcome. Thus anarchists would be drawn to accept that "the price of eternal liberty is eternal vigilance" (Phillips 1852).

If the first argument challenges the *achievability* of an anarchist "postrevolutionary resting point", the second one questions it on the *conceptual* level. It is close to what I think Noam Chomsky has in mind with his remark that anarchism constitutes "an unending struggle, since progress in achieving a more just society will lead to new insight and understanding of forms of oppression that may be concealed in traditional practice and consciousness" (Chomsky 1986).

The generalisation of anarchist resistance to encapsulate not only the state and capital but all forms of domination in society — regimes of systematic inequality and exclusion such as patriarchy, white supremacy and alienated labour — moves its notions of social transformation beyond their previous formulation as the replacement of institutions to the redefinition of social patterns in all spheres of life. However, such a generalisation also means a shift in the understanding of the horizons of the anarchist project. While it has been possible to speak within a coherent framework about the abolition of institutions, the way in which anarchists have come to conceptualise domination (under the influence of critiques emanating from radical feminist, anti-racist and queer liberation movements) presents it with a concept to which the idea of abolition is not so easily attached. On such a reading, in fact, a condition without any form of domination or discrimination in society is literally unthinkable. This is because in order to speak of the abolition of domination, one needs to have access to its total picture, to the entire range of possible patterns of social inequality and exclusion — and we can never be sure that we have such a complete picture.

To clarify this, think for a moment about the ideals said to have animated the U.S. Declaration of Independence, as present in famous passages such as "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal" etc. This passage justly strikes us today as irredeemably hypocritical, and not just because it speaks of "men". Samuel Johnson pointed to the bitter irony "that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of Negroes" (Johnson 1775). Thomas Jefferson was, after all, a slave holder, as were many of the other signatories to the Declaration. They were all representatives of most prosperous section of the colonial elite, their wealth resting not only on slavery but also on the genocidal dispossession of North America's indigenous peoples.

However, while hypocrisy or voluntary blindness seem to be obvious explanations in hindsight, it is not certain that everything is attributable to such factors. Today we can still ask with honesty whether the American "Founding Fathers" truly realised, amid their declarations of freedom and equality, that Africans and Indigenous Americans *were* human beings, and that slavery, genocide and the denial of rights to women stood in stark contradiction to their own declared principles. Even if it does seem impossible to us to think otherwise, can the same safely be said about their attitudes to other forms of discrimination that are blatantly evident to us today, such as those against children? Few people are aware that until the 1880s the age of sexual consent for women in the U.S. was *ten*, and that the first state legislation in protection for children was passed only in 1875 (in New York). And what of the fairly recent recognition that "mentally disabled" people are not inferior, or that non-heterosexual practices are not sinful and unnatural? In light of what seems to have been an utter unawareness to such axes of inequality and oppression, it seems not entirely unlikely that such forms of domination were entirely "off the radar" for people in the past.

This leads to the crux of my second argument: How can we know that there are no forms of domination that remain hidden from us today, just as some that we do recognise were hidden from our predecessors? If we are at least prepared to entertain doubt on this matter, then we can no longer put ourselves in a position from which we can speak with any coherence about the abolition of *all* forms of domination. Here the objection that the writers of the Declaration of Independence were far from anarchists is irrelevant, since the history of anarchist movement is just as embarrassing in this respect. Instances of outright bigotry surrounding racism, sexism and homophobia are more abundant in anarchist literature than many anarchists would care to recall. Pierre Joseph Proudhon, as some of his unpublished fragments disclose, was a despicable misogynist and anti-Semite. "Man's primary condition is to dominate his wife and to be the master", he wrote, while "women know enough if they know how to mend our socks and fix our steaks" (Proudhon 1875, cited in Hyams 1979:274. cf. Copley 1989). "The Jew", moreover, "is the enemy of humankind. It is necessary to send this race back to Asia, or exterminate it" (Proudhon undated, cited in Edwards 1969:228n. cf. Makhno 1927). Bakunin's writings are also famously rife with anti- Semitic and anti-German attitudes (Bakunin 1873:104ff and 175ff). Kropotkin and many other Russian anarchists supported the first World War (Avrish 1967:118–9). And as late as 1935, the prominent Spanish anarchist periodical *Revista Blanca* could still carry the following, typically homophobic, editorial response to the question "What is there to be said about those comrades who themselves are anarchists and who associate with inverts [*sic*]?":

> They cannot be viewed as men if that "associate" means anything apart from speaking to or saluting sexual degenerates. If you are an anarchist, that means that you are more morally upright and physically strong than the average man. And he who likes inverts is no real man, and is therefore no real anarchist (cited in Cleminson 1995).

Although nobody chooses their ideological ancestors, such statements should nevertheless compel anarchists to endorse a healthy scepticism about the comprehensiveness of their own, contemporary accounts of domination. As a result, the idea of an end to all forms of domination becomes an epistemological impossibility. We cannot think such a state of affairs since we do not possess the full list of features that are supposed to be *absent* from it. Admittedly, we might have

a better idea about forms of domination today simply because there are more voices expressing them. Movements endorsing indigenous, queer, and youth liberation have taken their place much more vividly in the public sphere over recent years, and thus contributed to the articulation of resistance to domination in forms that have not been explored before. But this is not enough to ensure us that all possible axes along which domination operates have been exposed.

If one insists on the potential need for anarchist agency under any conditions, then the notion of an "anarchist society" as an achievable goal loses its meaning. At most, an "anarchist society" is a society in which everyone is an anarchist, that is, a society in which every person wields agency against rule and domination. To be sure, the frequency of the need to do so may hopefully diminish to a great extent, in comparison to what an anarchist approach would deem necessary in present societies. However, one has no reason to think that it can ever be permanently removed. Where does such a state of affairs leave anarchists today?

The primary conclusion that anarchists can (and often do) draw from the dissociation of their project form a post-revolutionary resting point is to transpose their notion of social revolution to the present-tense. Feeding back into the individualist grounding of prefigurative politics discussed above, anarchist modes of interaction — non-hierarchical, voluntary, cooperative, solidaristic and playful — are no longer seen as features on which to model a future society, but rather as an everpresent potential of social interaction here and now. Such an approach promotes anarchy as culture, as a lived reality that pops up everywhere in new guises, adapts to different cultural climates, and should be extended and developed experimentally *for its own sake*, whether or not one believes it can become, in some sense, the prevailing mode of society. Also, it amounts to promoting the view of anarchy as a feature of everyday life, in mundane settings such as "a quilting bee, a dinner party, a black market…a neighborhood protection society, an enthusiasts' club, a nude beach" (Hakim Bey 1991). The task for anarchists, then, is not to "introduce" a new society but to realise it as much as possible in the present tense.

Part II: Anarchist Anxieties

Chapter 4: Power and Equality

Leadership and Power in Anarchist Organising, Part One

> You are approached to answer questions for our group, make decisions and announcements. You even think it is okay to define our group to visitors, strangers. Somehow you aren't ever questioned by the group for this behavior…You are not the boss. Get over yourself…Its like you think that calling yourself an anarchist makes you clean and pure and no longer subject to self examination or criticism. You've made the term repulsive to me.
>
> — Anon., "What It Is to Be a Girl in an Anarchist Boys Club"

Up until now, this thesis has focused on the analysis of the anarchist movement in terms of its political culture, recent history and ideological thinking. Beginning with this chapter, I take on a more engaged approach which develops and intervenes in several topics of debate that are at the centre of the movement's concerns in the present day. Whereas the speaking voice employed so far has been that of the curious investigator, maintaining a relatively neutral stance towards the substantive content of anarchist positions, the following chapters adopt the voice of the reflective anarchist activist who is thinking within these positions, and seeks clarification from an anarchist perspective on topics of controversy and dilemma in the movement.

I have chosen to take the issue of leadership and power in anarchist organising as the first topic of such intervention for two reasons. First, because on any protracted observation of activist discussions it is clearly the most recurrent and acute issue of introspection. Second, and more importantly, because the discussion of these issues involves the clarification of core concepts in anarchist theory such as power, autonomy and solidarity, which deserve precedence in the order of treatment.

Since the tangled and multifaceted nature of the present discussion requires expansive attention, it is divided into two chapters. In this first one, I begin with an exposition of the anxieties around the term "leadership" in contemporary anarchist discourse. I then move to a more conceptual discussion of leadership as power. Drawing on both anarchist and non-anarchist sources, I develop a three-fold understanding of power that can greatly clarify the debate. The first and most basic is "power-to" (L. potentia), or the capacity to change reality. This is seen to generate two further, and distinct, modes of power in its application to human relations. These are "power-over" (L. *potestas*), a concept related to control, coercion, enforcement and domination, and the standard sense in which the term is addressed in scholarly literature; and "power-among", a concept related to influence, initiative and co- inspiration in non-coercive, roughly egalitarian settings, which is developed by the prominent eco-feminist writer Starhawk. I then examine the way in which the structural conditions of anarchist organising minimise the role of "power over" within them — in particular in its manifestation as rationalised enforcement. As a result, I argue, anarchist anxieties around power in the movement should be traced to two different sources:

standing inequalities of access to "power-to", and lack of transparency in the dynamic exercise of "power-among".

Regarding the first issue, I argue in this chapter that such inequalities can be usefully understood as stemming from inequalities of what I call "activist resources" — material ones as well as skills and access to networks — which condition the ability to participate in movement activities. In this conception there can be grounded conscious mechanisms for making influence more equally accessible. The second issue, discussed in the next chapter, looks at the tension between the overt or covert, formal or informal exercise of non-coercive influence. Here, I offer a sustained critique of prevailing arguments invoking "The Tyranny of Structurelessness", in which the lack of formal organisation is seen as the source of invisible and unaccountable influence.

However, these arguments are not only conceptually inadequate in their explanatory claims, but also normatively problematic in their proposals for the subsuming of influence into formal structures and discussion-fora. These proposals ignore the latter's inadequacy for securely planning illegal activities, and — more importantly — their reinforcement of patriarchy. On these considerations, spaces for informal, invisible and behind-the-scenes power come to be seen as both necessary and desirable. As a different resolution to the anxieties raised here I suggest some elements of a "culture of solidarity" around the radical exercise of power, discussing the concept of solidarity from an anarchist perspective.

"But we don't have leaders…"

Let us be clear about this: with all the prefigurative politics, horizontalism and sitting in a circle during meetings, there are clearly power-inequalities in the anarchist movement. There are observable situations where some activists consistently have a larger personal presence, more frequently initiate actions and projects, assume positions of responsibility, and speak and get listened to more than others. At the more extreme ends, some anarchist collectives have become cliquey, or fallen under the sway of a visible and more-or-less permanent leader(ship). In other situations, activists' fear of anything that might be seen as a leadership dynamic impedes initiative, leading to stagnation and disempowerment.

One important issue is the "demographics" of power, the fact that anarchist leadership positions overwhelmingly reflect regimes of domination in the wider society. Locations of disproportionate power in anarchist circles do tend to be inhabited by men more often than women, whites more often than non-whites, able persons more often than disabled ones — and there is often behaviour which is racist, sexist, heterosexist and so on. I will return to this aspect later. It should be emphasised, however, that the question who has disproportionate power and why is conceptually separate from *what* power is and *how* it is wielded. There can be a demographically diverse elite. More realistically, there can be unequal power distribution in groups that are intentionally homogeneous — such as an all-woman, all- black feminist group (or an all-male, all-white feminist group for that matter).

The recognition of these realities, and the need to "deal" with them somehow, has generated a great deal of heated debate in the movement over the past few years. There is a wide recognition in the movement of the serious and often chronic nature of these issues, as well as many genuine and extensive efforts to confront them — especially about the connection to regimes of domination (Anonymous5 undated, CWS undated, Martinez 2000, DKDF 2004, Crass 2004a, Aguilar 2005).

Concerns about disproportional power-relations constantly surface at meetings, during actions and in passing conversations — still echoing with the same preoccupations that feminists and peace activists have faced since the 60s.

Really, it is not surprising that the discussion is so difficult. Anarchists and other grassroots movements are, after all, experimenting with the "uncharted territory" of non-hierarchical social relations, going against the grain of their own socialisation as infants, pupils and workers. Prole Cat (2004) writes:

> Everywhere we turn in capitalist society is hierarchical organization…The habits and perspectives that accompany such a social arrangement do not automatically disappear as one enters the gates of the revolutionary movement…Without explicitly renouncing anarchist politics, [activists] often begin to drift into modes of behavior that are decidedly authoritarian. Or perhaps their activist life becomes one long struggle between their desire to accomplish social change, and a conscious effort to stifle their impulses to "lead". The leaders and the followers, the by-products of an authoritarian society: this is the raw material from which we must build the free society…We must begin our egalitarian relations today, among our damaged selves, if we are to live in a free world tomorrow.

Meanwhile the concept of "leadership" occupies an uncomfortable position in the anarchist movement's political vocabulary. The word is subject to *conflicting* decontestations (Freeden 1996:76–7), affixing it with both positive and negative overtones. The negative association for anarchists is leadership as a position of authority and command, the leader as the politician or general, to which anarchists are naturally antagonistic. Because Prole Cat thinks this is the only relevant problem, s/he ends up denying the validity of the concerns:

> The solution is simplicity itself: let the leaders lead, and the followers follow. To an extent, the best course is to allow people to fall into the roles with which they are most comfortable (since they are going to anyway!). We cannot change people overnight, nor should we try to. Rather, our task should be to discern where the boundaries lie between leadership and authority, and act accordingly…The presence of sanctions…separate[s] the exercise of authority from legitimate free leadership…we should not worry overmuch about the authoritarian implications of leadership. Let us see to it that none has power over another, that is to say, that none may punish another who disagrees, in any way. If these conditions are met, than we will be well on our way. Leadership is not authoritarian, authority is!

Such facile dismissal of the issue is, however, clearly a case of confused thinking. On the strength of this argument alone, it should seem that the entire anarchist movement is experiencing some sort of collective psychosis around leadership, imagining a problem where none exists. Still the fact remains that most anarchists *do* believe that there is a problem, and it would seem highly unlikely that there is nothing more to it than an illusion. More fundamentally, there is a limited understanding of "power" here which reduces it to the ability to punish (or to threat punishment). The latter is named "authority", although it is much closer to what we mean by "coercion".

Other difficulties are presented by a statement from Murray Bookchin (2003):

> Many individuals in earlier groups like the CNT were not just “influential militants” but outright leaders, whose views were given more consideration — and deservedly so! — than those of others because they were based on more experience, knowledge, and wisdom, as well as the psychological traits that were needed to provide effective guidance. A serious libertarian approach to leadership would indeed acknowledge the reality and crucial importance of leaders — all the more to establish the greatly needed formal *structures* and *regulations* that can effectively *control* and *modify* the activities of leaders and recall them when the membership decides their respect is being misused or when leadership becomes an exercise in abusive exercise of power.

What is acutely missing this time formulation is a consideration of the egalitarian distribution of leadership qualities and positions. It is one thing to acknowledge that leadership is a useful quality, but quite another to ask *who* leads *when.* Bookchin’s formulation limits any problem with the issue of leadership to the possible abuse of such positions and their consolidation into unaccountable power, while glossing over whether or not these positions are continuously inhabited by the same individuals. However, one may doubt whether a “serious libertarian” approach can sit satisfied with what is, essentially, a call to meritocracy. Even if the distribution of influence is entirely dependent on “experience, knowledge and wisdom”, it can still be grossly inegalitarian if certain individuals who have these qualities consistently lead the group while the rest follow. Is this of no consequence to anarchists?

Beyond this, it is questionable whether such qualities are the only ones that should be taken into consideration when asking who should have an influence on anarchist activities. It would seem that for Bookchin, the only criterion for evaluating anarchist structures is their utility for advancing a revolutionary program. This brackets a whole intrinsic, rather than instrumental values that anarchists find in their groups: that they be nurturing spaces, facilitating the self realisation of individuals, and providing them with a self-created environment for overcoming alienation and entrenched oppressive behaviours.

Many anarchists also harbour suspicion towards the imagery of the charismatic “progressive” leader (e.g. Gandhi, King, Mandela), since it comes into conflict with their own imagery of resistance as a self-directed and face-to-face effort of communities, in which people draw support and inspiration horizontally from each other rather than deferring to a charismatic figurehead. Leadership is also not a quality that anarchists tend to ascribe to their movement’s role within the revolutionary process in general. Although previous generations of anarchists could sometimes speak of the anarchist movement as providing a “leadership of ideas” to “the exploited masses” (Makhno et.al. 1926), many contemporary anarchists would consider such terms strongly paternalistic. Rather than “organising people” transitively, anarchists tend to trust in people’s capacity to self-organise around their own struggles and form networks of solidarity with other autonomous initiatives.

On the other hand, there are at least some senses of leadership that anarchists tend to use approvingly. One that seems entirely uncontroversial is the corollary of the previous proposition, namely that a struggle should be “led” by those who have the closest stake in it. I think anarchists would not find anything problematic with the statement that women should lead anti-patriarchy struggles, or that people of colour should lead struggles against racism. In this sense leadership is connected to decentralisation and political subsidiarity, whereby one could say that decisions are made “as close as possible” to the “point of struggle”. Those who have the crucial stake in

a struggle (or a given campaign, action or mobilisation) should direct it. They should have the decisive voice on its progression, and shape the parameters along which their allies are asked to support it and express their solidarity. In such a situation, allies would see it as entirely acceptable to pay attention and accommodate themselves, up to a point, to the leading constituency's expressed needs and requests.

While this sense of leadership is probably well-accepted in the anarchist movement, it happens on somewhat different terms from the sense that preoccupies activists — leadership within locally-grounded, more-or-less continuous networks and collectives. Here, there have been attempts by some anarchists to reclaim the concept of "leadership" as a positive value, articulating it as the function of persons who mainly empower others and help facilitate a group's self-directed activity. Thus for example, rather than identifying leadership necessarily with a coercive structure, Chaz Bufe proposes a "new model" in which "leadership is permeable — anyone who has sufficient motivation and commitment will likely become part of the multifaceted, de facto, and ever-changing leadership within a non-hierarchical organization" (Bufe 1998). While Chris Crass, perhaps a bit optimistically, states that "the anti-hierarchical, egalitarian or horizontal organizing models of anarchism facilitate as many people as possible sharing leadership roles, power and decision making." (Crass 2004b) This sense of leadership has as its central themes voluntarism, temporariness and rotation and is, as such, probably narrow enough to be acceptable to many anarchists. However, some serious clarifications are in order as to what all these words mean, where the red lines are, and how to make it happen.

From Leadership to Power

Let us begin to approach the issue by looking at some common-language uses of the word "leadership". Most broadly, the verb "to lead" invokes a sense of spatial differentiation: to lead is to be in front, ahead. This is true whether we are speaking of a song leading the charts, of a candidate or athlete leading a race, or of one person leading another towards a destination. But the difference between the first two examples and the third is whether this "being ahead" merely describes a relative positioning, or also a transitive relationship whereby whoever is doing the leading is *acting upon* whoever is led or follows. When we say that "the samba band is leading the march", we can have either possibility in mind. If the course of the march is predetermined and known in advance to the marchers, then to say that the band is leading (and that the marchers follow) only describes their relative positioning — the band is simply in front. But we can also be describing a situation in which agency is at work, where the course is either not known in advance or is supposed to be different, and the movement of the band *determines* where the rest of the march goes. Here the band is *taking* the others in a given direction. This second picture expresses more fully the transitivity of the verb "to lead", the sense of the verb more associated with a position of "leadership", and is in fact closer to its origin (from Old English, *ltfdan* "cause to go with one", causative of "to travel" — *lidan*).

Generalising now from the second sense, we can see that leadership in the relevant anarchist setting of an affinity group or network could most broadly be defined as the position of one or more individuals in a group who have a *major influence* on the actions of the group as a whole. To lead, in its barest political sense, means to navigate the actions oneself and of others — to occupy a position within the group that has large part in determining where it moves. The purpose of

this verbal clarification is to shift aside the term leadership and focus on the much more useful concept of power. Leadership "as such" — as a mere description of a person's position — is bereft of political significance if it is not connected to power as a central concept. Even on its barest, most primitive notion as a deliberate affect on reality (cf. Russell 1938), power is clearly present in all leadership phenomena. But what kinds of power are implied by different instances of "leadership" in anarchist organising? How could anarchists best understand the functioning and distribution of power within their own networks? And what issues do different forms of power present for anarchists?

Let me swiftly dispel the misconception that anarchists oppose power "as such" — and thus attach themselves to an impossible goal (Newman 2001, cf. Glavin 2004). This is shown untrue by their political language, in which anarchists constantly speak of "empowerment" as a positive goal, celebrate "people power" and look to ways of "bringing power back to the grassroots". The concept of empowerment has a positive value attached to it in anarchist discourse. Empowerment is seen as a process whereby people literally acquire power, whether in psychological terms, i.e. having the self- confidence to initiate change in their situation with the belief that their actions will be effectual, or in more concrete terms, i.e. having access to the resources and capacities that are necessary for carrying that change through. On the other hand, anarchists want to "fight the power", or at least "the powers that be", under which people are systematically subject to power (under the state, capitalism, patriarchy). This indicates, not a "rejection of power", but a more nuanced and differentiated use of the concept.

Power-over as Domination

Discussions of power in standard academic literature overwhelmingly gravitate around the understanding of the concept inaugurated by Max Weber. Though Weber's definitions of the term differ slightly among his various writings, they all conceive of power as domination (*Herrschaft*), consisting in the imposition of one an actor's will on another. Thus Weber says that power is "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests" (Weber 1947:152) or, in a more condensed version, "the possibility of imposing one's will upon the behaviour of other persons" (Weber 1954:323).

This conception of power was carried over to American political theory through the work of Robert Dahl and other pluralist writers. In his early article "The Concept of Power", Dahl emphasised a view of power as a relationship of influence rather than a property of persons. This suggests that power can be defined in the following formula: "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" (Dahl 1957:80) Later in the same piece he offers a slightly different definition, whereby power involves "a successful attempt by A to get a to do something he would not otherwise do" (p.82). The difference between the two statements is one of capacity versus success — between the possession of power and its exercise. Dahl's definition does not specify conflict of wills or interests, and is thus inclusive of the power present in persuasion or in a request For this reason, I would like to reserve the expression "power-over" for cases where there is conflict, observable or latent, between actors' wills and/or interests (more on this below).

Bachrach and Baratz (35f.), and Dahl (2003:38–43), offer similar typologies of power-over that are useful as a rule of thumb. These embrace force, coercion, manipulation and authority. They differ in regard to *why* B complies.

Force is used when A achieves his objectives in the face of B's non-compliance by stripping him of the choice between compliance and non-compliance.

Coercion is at work where B complies in response to A's credible threat of deprivation (or of "sanction"). In the face a disadvantageous cost/benefit calculus created by the threat, B complies of his own unfree will.

Manipulation occurs when A deliberately lies or omits information in communicating his wants to B. The latter complies without recognising either the source or the exact nature of the demand upon him.

Authority is in place when B complies to A's command out of B's recognition that A has the right to issue the command and that B has a corresponding duty to obey.

Dahl's further analysis of power in its operation, with its focus on observable behaviour in the making of decisions in the public sphere (Dahl 1961), has come under a great deal of criticism due to its "superficial and restrictive [nature]…leading to an unjustified celebration of American pluralism, which it portrayed as meeting the requirements of democracy" (Lukes 2005:15). Thus Bachrach and Baratz (1970) argued against the stipulation of a decision-making crossroads as the only venue in which power is exercised, pointing out that this also happens through moments of *non-* decision. They pointed to manipulation on the level of the political "rules of the game", the shaping of "predominant values, beliefs, rituals, and institutional procedures…that operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of certain persons and groups [often a minority or elite group] at the expense of others" (43). Those who benefit are placed in a preferred position to defend and promote their vested interest. Thus power-over is also present "when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A" (1970:7). Lukes (2005:27–8) accepts Bachrach and Baratz's corrective, and shares their disillusioned attitude to pluralism. Still, he says they are missing another dimension of power-over, in which conflict itself is not ascertainable. A may also exercise power over B by

> influencing, shaping or determining his very wants. Indeed, is it not the supreme exercise of power to get another or others to have the desires you want them to have — that is, to secure their compliance by controlling their thoughts and desires?

Power as manipulation, for Lukes, is present in a deeper way than with Bachrach and Baratz's protagonist, who merely lacks information; the manipulation is also said to happen on the level of the person's consciousness — not only in discrete interpersonal scenarios but as a societal mechanism. Lukes' invocation of the "Big Brother" metaphor involved with this concept (Lukes 30, cf. Orwell 1949, Goldstein 2002) leads him to argue that what is at stake with power-over in general is that A makes B do something *against B's interests*. Either B is adequate judge of their own interests — making for a present conflict leading to coercion or force, or else B is rendered an inadequate judge of their own interests due to the deep social manipulation of their own values or wants. The account of B's real interests, for Lukes, is an empirical matter within a "normatively specific" framework.

We may now relate the concept of power-over to the anarchist concept of "domination". To couch things in the terms invoked above, it can be said that in the relevant anarchist sense, a

person is dominated when s/he is involuntarily subjected to any number of intersecting social relations involving the systematic use of force, coercion and manipulation. The placement is by definition involuntary: people do not choose the determinants of their life-prospects, the social class they are born into, the race and gender with which they are identified. By way of translation into the vocabulary of redistributive egalitarian philosophy, it is as if being born anything other than an affluent white male qualified as "brute bad luck" (cf. Dworkin 1981, Cohen 1989). Remaining within these relations is also not voluntary, since a collective effort to change social relations is sometimes far more costly than retaining them. Even under the dubious assumption that Western countries are still (or have ever been) liberal democracies, the rules of the legitimised political game may allow a person, at most, to act with some leeway within existing social relations. But challenges to the latter's basic logic are repressed with fierceness proportional to its chances of success.

As a sense of power, the word domination is more comprehensive than another concept, "hierarchy" or "stratification", which describing the *structure* of many of the social relations anarchists object to, but not of them all. On an "old-school" approach,

> Anarchist analysis…starts from the fact that all of our major institutions are in the form of hierarchies, i.e. organisations that concentrate power at the top of a pyramidal structure, such as corporations, government bureaucracies, armies, political parties, religious organisations, universities, etc. It then goes on to show how the authoritarian relations inherent in such hierarchies negatively affect individuals, their society, and culture. (McKay et.al 2003 §A)

However, the imagery of all society's problems as stemming from organisation in top-down pyramid structures is quite one-dimensional. Talking about hierarchy implies that inequalities of status are visible; either because they are formalised (say, in the relations between a CEO and a secretary), or because one can identify their presence in a particular behaviour or utterance. However, as insights of feminists, anti-racists and queer activists concerning the fluidity and disembodiment of power relations clarify, the unfreedom of human beings is often insidious, reproduced through performative acts in which the protagonists may not even be conscious of their roles. While all sites of domination are maintained by *authoritarian* and/or *disciplinary practices of social reproduction*, not all of them display identifiable hierarchies. Foucault has famously explored how power is articulated in the "capillaries" of social relations, in cultural grammar, routine practices, social mechanisms and institutions — in a much more subtle and potent form than in its rougher expressions as military violence (Foucault 1988:16–49, Foucault 1980; cf. May 1994, Simpson 1994, Passetti 1996 (Foucault and anarchism) and Call 2002, Adams 2002a, Glavin 2004 (post-structuralism and anarchism). These insights feed into the formulation of a concept which transcends the structural characteristics of hierarchy. It is on the basis of such an implicit analysis of current social relations that the concept of domination is reproduced within anarchist discourse.

Many times, the dominated person can only symbolically point to an embodied source of her or his unfreedom. The need to do so explains the continuing appeal of the idea of "the ruling class" among anarchists. Here it should be noted that it could make sense to speak of a ruling class in certain contexts, if the mapping of the overlapping memberships of governments, corporate boards, bureaucracies and other influential for a are anything to go by. But not all cases of

deprivation in the globalised world are directly traceable to the agency of particular member's of this ruling class.

What remains to be commented on in relation to power-over is the concept of authority. The introduction of manipulation as a structural factor has important implications to the ongoing discussion around the legitimacy of political authority and its connection with power, much of it in the wake of Robert Paul Wolff's "philosophical anarchist" attack on the concept of legitimate authority. Lukes' radical view of power, with its appeal to empirical claims, offers a renewed challenge to arguments about legitimate authority in hierarchical society, this time from a more full-blooded anarchist point of view.

Wolff's philosophical anarchist attack on the notion of *de jure* authority, a philosophically substantiated right to command and corresponding duty to obey. This is distinct from *de facto* authority — where *B recognises* A's right his own duty — putting aside the question of whether B is right to do so. Authority is recognised when B complies *because* A can command him, regardless of whatever independent reason B may or may not have to comply. Often, recognition of some authorities is so habituated that compliance is automatic and unreflective (Dahl 2003:42). For Wolff, the issue is whether authority is morally legitimate regardless of its de-facto recognition. Mobilising a Kantian account of an absolute duty to uphold one's autonomy, Wolff rejects any abdication of autonomy without supporting reasons (Wolff 1971).

The main direction of responses to Wolff's criticism have been arguments that begin with cases of a temporary abdication of autonomy which even the staunchest philosophical anarchist would justify, e.g. following "doctor's orders" or obeying a person chosen to lead a specific task. From this, a defence of limited political authority in the state is extrapolated — establishing parameters in which the forfeit of one's autonomy is justifiable. Joseph Raz (1990:5) proposes that authority is legitimate when it is a better way of coordinating what needs to be done anyway.

> Authorities are justified in terms of a task they have to fulfil. The right to rule is the result of a need to be ruled [sic!], a need arising from the needs of the community and its members…Authority is only justified to the extent that it serves these needs and [community] interests. We are duty bound to obey a legitimate authority because doing so…would serve interests and needs we have independent (i.e. independent of that directive) reason to serve. (Raz, cf.122–5)

On such a "service conception" of authority, the justification of authority becomes purely instrumental, based on its "pre-emption" (133–7) of independent reasons:

> There can be justified (second order) coordinative practices setting a person or body as a coordinative authority, i.e. as capable of authoritatively determining when there is a coordination problem and what to do about it, and such practices may be justified. Such practices are rules which justify the legitimacy of an authority (within proper bounds). They make all of us able to solve coordination problems better than we might go when we try to judge for ourselves whether there is a coordination problem and whether the subjective conditions for its solution are met. (10)

The gist of this is account and its supporting theses is that authority is legitimate, consent issues aside, when it would be more effective to obey some people's directives unquestioningly in order

to "get on with it", rather than everyone having to think and decide for themselves — when it is a shortcut to what people would conclude anyway. This is still an attempt to "assimilate authority as a right to rule with authority in one of its other uses" (4). If the duty to obey a legitimate authority is nothing other than the duty to most effectively "uphold just institutions", on the Rawlsian conceptions, then Raz states that institutions' justice can be assessed according to the requirements of the "service conception".

This may be an adequate response to strictly "philosophical" anarchism, which Raz elsewhere identifies as a "cluster of recurring considerations concerning the intrinsic desirability of people conducting their own life by their own lights".

> The case for the validity of a claim to authority must include justificatory considerations sufficient to outweigh such counter-reasons. That is one reason why the case is hard to make. But if anarchists are right to think that it can never be made, this is for contingent reasons and not because of any inconsistency in the notion of a rational justification for authority, nor in the notion of authority over moral agents (Raz 1988:57. cf. Roberson 1998).

It does not, however, address the *political* anarchist's argument that authority can never meet the "service conception" in a hierarchical relationship, due to the ever- present (though often hidden) conflict of interests between those which claim the right to command and those who recognises their duty to obey. a permanent conflict of interests between rulers and ruled. This may be seen as "contingent reasons", only that the matter of "contingency" is now whether or not authority is claimed in the context of permanent hierarchies and concentrations of wealth and power. While political anarchists do not need to argue against any forfeit of autonomy as such, they can still argue that it is always a great mistake to do so in a hierarchical society.

This also reflects on traditional debates on consent. If autonomy continues to be seen as an initial point of departure, then any consent to state authority would have to involve consent to Raz's "second order coordinative practices setting a person or body as a coordinative authority". However, if (again with Lukes) it is a feature of hierarchical society that people's recognition of their own interests is manipulated, this could include their perception of what *scale of coordination* is required to deliver on their real needs and interests.

Thus for Raz it would merely be another "contingency" that a growth-driven society based on global trade in food and energy and high-intensity technological development requires coordination on a scale, intensity and sophistication far removed from what is necessary in a decentralised society based on more-or-less local self-reliance in food and energy, low carbon emissions, and negative or zero growth in throughput. Here, political anarchists can say that justifying governmental authority in the real world would mean justifying former model — which is by no means an obvious choice (see chapter 7).

Power-to and Power as Influence

Lukes argues that the "absolutely basic common core to, or primitive notion lying behind all talk of power is the notion that A in some way affects B " (2005:27–8). Now Clearly A and B can be persons or groups. But if B is a physical object, for example a block of wood, and A moves it from here to there, then it still makes sense to speak of the action as a manifestation of power:

A ‘s power to alter physical reality. So perhaps an even more basic notion is that A has power to the degree that A can alter reality, material and/or social. This power is antecedent to its use: it is “there” to the extent that success can be *predicted* for the possessor’s attempts to influence physical objects or another’s behaviour (in a hierarchical chain of command, for example, the prediction of constant success would be very reliable). This notion of power-to, *potentia* or, in Castellano, *poder* (n. “power”, v. “be able to”) is distinct from the mobilisation of that power to it is known (or capable of being discovered and developed) by its possessor.

The relationship between this concept of power and the idea of power as influence (whether or not it it power-over involving conflict of interests) is that they are of a different analytical order. Power-over always has its source in the dominant party’s power-to. Force cannot be applied without some measure of bodily strength — an aspect of power-to — even if it is just enough to pull a lever or trigger (and for someone else to have built the machine). A cannot coerce B without *being able* to exact whatever deprivation the threat inherent in coercion specifies (or without being able to give B the illusion that he can do so). The deprivation could involve, in addition to force, A acting to mobilise both resources and consent around a deprivation exacted on B by people other than A, often in a rationalised way). If the judge had no power to speak, read and write, he would not be able to actualise any power over the prisoner — though by law he “has” that power.

In a classical employment of the distinction between power-to and the power- over it may generate, Baruch Spinoza argues:

> [Man] always endeavours as far as in him lies to preserve his own being and (since every man has right to the extent that he has power *[potentia]*, whether he be wise or ignorant), whatever he endeavours and does, he endeavours and does by the sovereign right of Nature…
>
> …Furthermore, it follows that every man is subject to another’s right for as long as he is in the other’s power *[sub potestate* hebere], and he is in control of his own right to the extent that he can repel all force, take whatever vengeance he pleases for injury done to him, and, in general, live as he chooses to live. (Spinoza 2000/1677, ch.2 §8–9, pp.41–2)

One’s power-to can only be actualised to the degree that one is not subject to power-over, the latter conceived generically regardless of its source and motivation. The difference between this and Weber’s approach to power-over is that Spinoza takes the point of view of the man who is *resisting* domination. While the first sentence in the quote from Spinoza could be taken to imply that “might makes right”, it could also be read more subtextually, recalling the place of “Nature” in Spinoza’s philosophy. Nature, in the *Ethics*, is the totality of being, or God — a reality which is for Spinoza *completely* deterministic (Spinoza 1677). This explains why the term “being in control of one’s right” is used, rather than Freedom — which again has a very specific meaning. For Spinoza, in the unfolding deterministic course of God or Nature, power and right are identical because they are both delusions, pertaining to the “second level” of knowledge (which needs to be transcended along with its resultant passions in order to achieve “human freedom”).

More materially, note the distinction being made in the second statement between having a “right” and being “in control of one’s own right”. Subjugation, or domination, or being on the

receiving side of "power-over", is for Spinoza to be subject to another's "right" — which that other possesses to the extent that he has *potentia*, or "power-to".

The relationship between power-over and power-to has also been given a recent Marxist twist by John Holloway, who sees the concepts as stand in a "dialectical" and "oppositional" relationship. Recasting the European Marxist theory of alienation in terms of power relations, the starting point is said to be "power-to" as a capability to change primarily the material environment, as reflected in the imagery of the *homo faber*. However, the reproduction of capitalist social relations consists in a constant conversion of "power-to" into "power-over" — the transfer of control over human capacities, most centrally in the form of selling labour-power. This alienates humans form their capability to do and puts it under the rule of capital. Hence Holloway suggests a conception of social struggle centred on the notion of liberating "power-to" from its conversion into "power-over" (Holloway 2002:36–7):

> Power-to exists as power-over, but the power-to is subjected to and in rebellion against power-over, and power-over is nothing but, and therefore absolutely dependent upon, the metamorphosis of power-to…The attempt to exercise power-to in a way that does not entail the exercise of power over others, inevitably comes into conflict with power-over…power-to, if it does not submerge itself in power-over, can exist, overtly or latently, only as power-against, as anti-power.

Such a conception may be attractive for particular illustrative purposes, but it has two major flaws. First, is not especially useful for our present discussion. Such an analysis of power takes place on the level of society as a whole, in which capitalist relations of production are assumed from the outset. We cannot conceive of anarchist collectives as sites in which the same type of antagonism operates. The question is not, in our case, how objectionable senses of power operate in society as a whole, but what forms of power we might have a problem with *within* the already-antagonistic structures of the movement. This is not to say that these structures are necessarily free of power-over. However, it is difficult to argue that any form of objectionable power within anarchist groupings operates in the same way, and is generated for the same reasons, as it is in capitalist society.

The second, related reason is that this framework presents power-to and power- over in a binary antagonism, and does not serve to explain forms of influence in social relations which are not clearly cases of power-over. Earlier I noted that power-over does not exhaust all meanings of influence. Lukes (32–33) asks whether persuasion is actually "power-over". He answers with a "yes and no". Yes, because B does something they wouldn't have done without A's intervention. No, because it could just as well be said that B autonomously accepts A's *reasons* which is the cause for B's action. Facing this contradiction Lukes invokes an irresolvable "Kantian antinomy" between causality and autonomy, and leaves matters at that.

However, influence without force, coercion or manipulation — indeed without conflict of interests — is a broader area that is normally left unexamined. Many such interactions do not involve express reasons. Imagine A asks B for a small favour (a glass of water, or to keep an eye on one's bike). If B grants the favour, it will in practice rarely involve a prior query regarding A's reasons. This is because A and B share cultural codes that stand at the background of their unspoken, mutual explanation of the situation. Still, A gets B to do something that B would not have otherwise done. But surely it matters whether B would not have done it because they didn't

want to, or because it hadn't occurred to them until A suggested it. A clearly has power over B in the first scenario, but there are forms of power *whose operation is so distant from the central meanings of power-over* (as visible or latent conflict of wills or interests) that they require separate examination. This suggests a view of cooperative power, where individuals influence each other's behaviour, but their cooperation is still concordant with the autonomy of each actor.

Power-with or power-among

Such a perspective is outlined in the threefold distinction among forms of power offered by eco-feminist writer Starhawk. Her first two categories parallel the the above. Power-over refers to power through domination, as it is "wielded in the workplace, in the schools, in the courts, in the doctor's office. It may rule with weapons that are physical or by controlling the resources we need to live: money, food, medical care; or by controlling more subtle resources: information, approval, love" (Starhawk 1987:9). The second category is "power-from-within", parallel to power-to, which is "akin to the sense of mastery we develop as young children with each new unfolding ability: the exhilaration of standing erect, of walking, of speaking the magic words that convey our needs and thoughts…We can feel that power in acts of creation and connection, in planting, building, writing, cleaning, healing, soothing, playing, singing, making love".

To these Starhawk adds a third form, power-with or power-among, "the power of a strong individual in a group of equals, the power not to command, but to suggest and be listened to, to begin something and see it happen". Elsewhere she speaks of power-among as "the influence we can exert in a group of equals, our power to shape the group's course and shift its direction" (1987:10 and 268). For other, similar uses of "power-with" in feminist literature see Eisler 1988, Woehrle 1992).

Power-to clearly stands in the the same generative position towards power-with, as it does towards power-over: the less one is able to do things (to communicate and to mobilise capabilities, skills and resources) the less one can influence others — whether or not it is against their interests. The idea of power-with is also useful because it provides us with a category of power which is not attached to power-over, and is capable of being wielded both positively and negatively from an anarchist perspective. Indeed, Starhawk locates the core "leadership" issues in horizontal groups around the machinations of power-with. These will be discussed in the next chapter. First, though, we can treat the relatively less problematic aspect of power in "static" terms — the unequal access to influence among individuals, differentials of "power-to" and, consequently, of the the "power-with" it may generate.

Equality and "Activist Resources"

Now in her definition, Starhawk does not clarify what the equality of a "group of equals" consists in. I assume, however, that what she has in mind is a group that is not structured hierarchically and has no internal mechanisms of coercion. This would mean that power-over is, *prima facie*, absent from the situation (I will criticise this assumption in the next chapter). One sense, however, in which it is *wrong* to assume without qualification that the members of the group are equal, is their capacity to wield power-with (how empowered they are). Thus we might clarify that problematic leadership patterns in anarchist groups can be seen as stemming from unequal distribution of power-with. Power-with is unequally distributed, wielded by some individuals

more than by others. So persons' having leading influence may not be a problem *as such*, but anarchists would insist on the crucial connection to *equality* in the access to that influence, and consequently in the the distribution of "leadership" when seen over time.

Starhawk calls on groups to identify how influence operates among them and evaluate it, so that "those who don't have much influence can begin to consider whether they want it and how to get it". As part of this process, those which have an unequal share of power-with are called upon to exercise "responsive leadership…the art of wielding power-with in ways that foster freedom", which "sees itself as a temporary condition. Instead of using skills, knowledge, information and experience to entrench ourselves in a position of power, we share them, try to spread them as widely as possible among others…everyone can see how leaders are chosen, and how they themselves can take on more responsibility and gather more power in the group" (271–2). On such a reading, people who find themselves in leadership positions are called upon to redistribute them.

The point, again, being that redistribution implies some form of equality as a goal. Not an "equality of power", just because that is a really unclear notion, but maybe something like "equal access to influence" in activist circles — when everyone can, if they want to, contribute in a genuinely equal way to defining the movement's direction, to the making of collective decisions, and more generally to changing the world. It means that anyone can easily get the skills, resources, recognition and support that they need in order to be effective and feel valued. The "equal access to influence" formula is adopted by theoretical definitions of democracy (cf. Gould 1988, Christiano 1990), which is not to say that such an ideal finds any measure of realisation within the "democratic" state. More importantly, it gives us some concrete way of understanding the "we are all leaders" refrain. To look again on the word leadership, Starhawk (269–270) attempts this distinction:

> In covens or affinity groups, which are small and intimate, when people are relatively equal in relevant experience and commitment, know each other well, and have time to develop trust, power and responsibility can be shared equally and everyone can feel empowered. Such groups are not, in reality, leaderless but rather "leaderful" — everyone in the group feels empowered to start or stop things, to challenge others or meet challenges, to move out in front or to fall back.

"Leaderful" may be a more adequate description, but whatever language we use, the main point is that what makes such leadership acceptable is that it is equally distributed (in the "leaderless" case what is equally distributed is nothing). In any given collection of people, if everybody does a roughly equal amount of leading at different times, then this is better than if some people do most of the leading most of the time, and much better than if a very few people do all of the leading — have all of the influence on how things go — all of the time. The more equally distributed is people's access to influence (over time and where it matters to them), the more the slogan "we are all leaders" is meaningfully realised. But in order to approach (re)distribution, we need a clearer idea about the foundations of power in social movements, at its material and sociological currency. What generates the ability to influence other activists? And to what degree can (some of) these things be equalised?

Empirically-driven literature on social movement networks provides a number of valuable insights into the operation of influence within them. In an ethnographic study of the anarchist *Earth First!* group in Manchester, Jonathan Purkis (2001) conceptualises unequal influence as the

result of inequalities in "cultural capital", borrowing Bordieu's term, "the collective amount of acquired knowledge, skills and aesthetic outlook which allows groups or individuals to produce themselves as a viable social force". Thus, for example,

> although Phil described himself as the "convenor" of MEF! there was little doubt that he was perceived by other political groups in Manchester as the leader. This seemed to be reinforced by the cultural capital which he had at his disposal: home access to a fax machine and electronic services, personal friendships with several of the original half dozen members of UKEF!, and employment with a "sympathetic" organisation. His stable position in Manchester ensured that, regardless of what other activists were doing, he always seemed slightly ahead. (12)

In a similar vein, sociologist Mario Diani (2003:106) invokes a "relational" view of leadership in social movements more generally. Leadership roles may result from

> certain actors' location at the centre of exchanges of practical and symbolic resources among movement organizations. This will not generate domination, if by that we mean actors' capacity to impose sanctions over others in order to control their behaviour, but rather varying degrees of influence. The latter may consist, for example, of actors' ability to promote coalition work among movement organizations.

While an activist narrative comes from Chris Crass, narrating the developments in his Food Not Bombs group (Crass 2002):

> We began to identify positions of leadership in the group and had open discussions of power and strategized ways to share it…seeing different levels of responsibility as stepping stones to help people get concrete things done, to build their involvement, to increase their sense of what they are capable of and to develop the skills necessary for the job…[it] is also about encouragement, recognizing that people frequently carry enormous insecurities about being good enough, having enough experience, having anything worth while to say and doubting that anyone thinks they're capable enough.

Crass calls this process "leadership development", a term I am still quite uncomfortable with since it resonates too strongly with the paternalistic language of urban renewal policy as well as with the darker side of managerial theory (cf. Hammonds 2000). But what matters for our purposes is that these and other analyses point towards the idea of "activist resources" as an attractive candidate for the currency of influence within nominally non-hierarchical social movements. So I would like to develop some clarity about equalising the type of resources that are required for effective influence in activism. As a starting point for adaptation we can use the typology suggested by Jo Freeman (1999:241:-265). She divides activist resources into tangible and intangible ones. Tangible resources identified are money, space and publicity. Intangible resources are divided into unspecialised (time, commitment) and specialised: expertise, access to networks, access to decision-makers, and status within the movement and in the broader polity.

Freeman's roster of resources, developed for analysing the women's movement, is not entirely relevant to our purposes. Access to decision-makers and status within the polity, for example, can

be ignored as peripheral to anarchist concerns. But the real problem is that Freeman's analysis is conditioned by the lack of an egalitarian agenda. By treating specialised resources instrumentally, Freeman turns their legitimated inequality into a definition: "Their essential characteristic is that they are possessed by only a few participants — only a few really need to possess them, for the point of diminishing returns is reached very quickly". First, if unequal distribution is the "essential characteristic" of some things, then these things are "unequally distributed", not "specialised". Are all material resources, which are also unequally distributed, "specialised"? Freeman obviously thinks they aren't, and she's right because that would clearly miss out on the meaning of "specialised", which points to something that has to do with a *division of labour*. Unquestioning acceptance of the logic of specialisation and efficiency ignores the possibility that equality can be enhanced by altering, or reducing the rigidity, of the division of labour — at least in terms of the relationships among individuals within a given collective group. However, in Freeman's model "specialised" is just code for "unequal". As a result, inequality becomes part of the model; the definition forecloses thinking about "specialised" resources as prone to equalisation — which they are, at least in part.

More fundamentally, we should question the tangible / intangible differentiation. To refer to money — the legal expression of a social relationship — as a "tangible" resource is inexcusably reifying (Marx 1857:ch.5, cf. Lukacs 1967/1920),). Rather, the point about these resources is not whether or not they are tangible, which does not explain anything about their inequality, but rather whether or not they entail a zero sum game — whether the possession/use/consumption of a resource by one person prevents/excludes/diminishes another person's doing the same. The van can only be use for one purpose at a time. If I use money to buy X I cannot use the same money to buy Y. On the other hand, I can easily teach you a skill or give you information, effectively duplicating the resource in question without depleting it for myself. To such non-zero sum resources we should add publicity, to the extent that it is in accessible electronic formats (in which case other zero sum resources become the issue — computers, printers, web access…).

In the same way it is questionable whether, as Freeman thinks, the point about "unspecialized, intangible" resources is that "any participant could contribute them if so inclined". It is precisely because of the different *constraints* that people have on their time, i.e. their time is not governed only by their inclinations, that this resource is unequal. Time is a zero sum resources as well — I cannot give my time to any number of activities at once, and I cannot give you more time than you have. As for commitment, which Freeman defines as "the willingness to take risks or entertain inconvenience", everyone except the existentialists agrees that is at least to some degree shaped by personal circumstances: one's age, biography, experiences and so on. The point about commitment is that, though non-zero sum, it is *harder to duplicate* than skills and access to networks. So are energy as well as resources such as confidence, articulation and charisma, which I look at below. Taking these points into consideration and giving the examples contemporary relevance, let me now suggest my own typology of activist resources:

This is obviously only one possible mapping. Other resources that give a person influence in anarchist collective groupings can be perhaps identified, and different sub-divisions suggested. However, the typology offered here provides sufficient material for discussion. We can now ask: what voluntary equalising mechanisms are available for each type of resource? I am only looking at voluntary mechanisms because only they have any chance of being applicable in the anarchist movement.

Beginning with zero sum resources, we can consider two distinct forms of voluntary redistribution: *sharing* and *collectivising*. Sharing redistributes from one person to one or more other people. The person who shares subjects the portion that s/he shares to the discretion of whoever s/he is sharing with. If I have a van, I can share it with you for a day and subject it to your discretion, with or without an explicit agreement on the purpose to which you will use it. I can also permanently share a zero sum resource with a person or group. In this case we agree that the use of the van, which used to be subject to my sole discretion, is now subject to decision-making by other people as well. Where money is concerned, I am familiar with three instances in which anarchist activists came into a million pounds and more through inheritance. In two cases, part of the money was used to set up activist funds that finance projects. In another, a fund was set up where several groups around the country applied for, and received, ten thousand pounds each to set up social centres.

Collectivising (or pooling) redistributes from several people as individuals to the same people as a group, subjecting the use of the resource whole to their collective decision-making, where before different parts of it were under the discretion of each individual. Again money is the most obvious example. This time, however, the money collectivised can also be money that is *potentially* accessible to individuals. Members of a group can go and separately raise donations or funding for their activity and then pool it. If several anarchists have individual access to what they call a "blag", a white scam for getting money off some institution, they can turn it into a collective blag by creating a fund that they can use for actions. They can further *share* the money by making decision-making over the money accessible to people who do not have a blag. Spaces are subject to the same logic. Personal spaces can be shared, and collective spaces can be established. If, in a given locale, the only space available for meetings or banner-making is a large-ish house owned by an activist co-op, then the members of this co-op and their milieu will have disproportionate access to space, and thus disproportionate influence in the movement. One solution is to rent a smaller house to live in, and funnel the rest of their housing benefit to operate a social centre.

Moving on to non-zero sum resources, the practices of sharing and collectivising can still be observed, but under different parameters. In the case of sharing, a non-zero sum resource such as a skill, or some information, or a video file, is duplicated from one person to others. The importance of redistributing (actually multiplying) such resources is already widely recognised in anarchist circles, as expressed in a recent statement from a member of the collective running the Blackstar anarchist bookshop in New Zealand (AlexandeR 2004):

> i still see a place for qualities of leadership embodied by different people at different times…by this i mean that we acknowledge a person's particular skills or expertise in an area, say creative direct action or research or whatever, and that may mean that the collective listens more carefully to those people, or perhaps they are assigned a role like facilitator (to use an example dear to my heart). however, these positions must be rotated and there must be regular skillshares to ensure that everybody who wishes to is able to take up particular roles.

Access to networks is another key activist resource that can be shared in this way. Since local activist milieus tend to be quite integrated, this type of resource is in particular need of redistribution when it comes to larger-scale activities, such as coordinating simultaneous direct actions or

longer-term campaigns. It is often, however, an important condition for day to day work as well. Because of the highly decentralised nature of activist movements, the ability to initiate and carry out actions is strongly conditioned on the capability to communicate with individuals outside one's face-to-face setting. Access to networks can thus be thought of in terms of the quantity and quality of communication-links that a person has with other activists, in particular those outside her immediate group or local area.

Communication links don't exists between groups as such. It is individuals within the groups who communicate with each other, some more than others. In his ethnography of activist networks in Barcelona, Jeff Juris (2004:49) identifies, as the most important network nodes, individuals who

> decipher, combine and recombine cultural codes, thereby allowing for the circulation of information among diverse network formations. [Among them there are] "social relayers," who process and distribute information throughout the inter-connected nodes of a particular network, and "social switchers," who occupy key nodal positions within multiple networks and are able to channel communication flows among alternative movement sectors. Through such concrete networking practices activist networks expand, diversify or contract. Despite the prevailing discourse of egalitarianism, however, network relayers, and even more so, network switchers occupy key positions of power, allowing them to significantly influence the flow, direction and intensity of network activity.

The wider diffusion of such networking capabilities can contribute significantly to equalising access to influence . On the most basic level, a person's connectivity is greatly increased by the awareness of, and access to, venues of communication with individuals from diverse groups and places. These could be regional or international gatherings, email lists and web forums. Beyond this, a familiarity with the architecture of the relevant networks (who's in touch with who, who is working on what) is also a resource that can be transferred. More substantially, however, the qualitative aspect of networking ties is determined in great measure by personal affinity, close mutual knowledge and trust. These can also be extended, for example by mutually-trusting activists introducing one another to each other's equally-trusted friends.

We now come to resources that are not zero sum, but also difficult to transfer. Some, such as commitment and energy, are not even stable resources for a given individual — the former changes with one's priorities and circumstances, the latter is often conditioned by health, mood and disposition. Such a complex combination of factors influences these resources that it is difficult to see how they can be consciously transferred. Moreover, there is a cluster of resources that can be identified in the area of interpersonal communication and face-to-face group dynamics. The possession of individual traits and skills such as articulate speech, self-confidence, strong convictions, even external appearance, all certainly play a role in a person's ability to influence others. Although such resources can sometimes be acquired or consciously developed, transferring them is a different matter; there seems to be something immediately odd about the imagery of anarchists giving each other "charisma- coaching" and lessons in articulation, personability and pep. What is distressing about this imagery is that it once again evokes the approach to such qualities in the world of business and statesmanship, where possessing them matters for generating influence. Thus the status of these qualities as *resources* is already destabilised. Why

did such qualities present themselves to us as resources in the first place? Is our thinking process about resources being influenced by problematic assumptions, carried over from hierarchically-organised realms of interaction where power-with exists, but as a complement to more overt power-over? Do different environments of human action give these qualities different degrees of significance, as far as generating influence is concerned? For instance, a competitive environment would seem to require them more than a cooperative one. Whereas in an anarchist context, it clearly takes more confidence and articulation to convince a large assembly to accept a course of action, than it does to organise an autonomous action with five other people. These anomalies raise the second issue around anarchist organising: the micro-political ways in which power is exercised, its formal and informal protocols. I turn to this in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Power, Invisibility and Solidarity

Leadership and Power in Anarchist Organising, Part Two

> You must always have a secret plan. Everything depends on this: it is the only question. So as not to be conquered by the conquered territory in which you lead your life, so as not to feel the horrible weight of inertia wrecking your will and bending you to the ground, so as not to spend a single night more wondering what there is to do or how to connect with your neighbours and countrymen, you must make secret plans without respite. Plan for adventure, plan for pleasure, plan for pandemonium, as you wish; but plan, lay plans constantly.
>
> CrimethINC, *Recipes for Disaster* (Olympia, 2004)

So far, the discussion of power has focussed on egalitarian access to non-coercive influence, outlining the constituents of power differentials between individuals, and looking at how they can change over time with egalitarian remediation. But this does not fully envelop current anarchist debates on power. The question of how power operates *once it is being exercised* merits separate discussion from how the access to it is *distributed* in the first place. Inequality in terms of the basic ability to participate is a problem, no matter how that participation takes place or what process is used to make collective decisions. Conversely, even equally-distributed influence can be abused and abusive. The issue here, then, is not the distribution of power but about the dynamics of power in action — the channels it flows through and the question of how in tune those flows are with anarchist ideas about social change.

We now move, then, to the various anxieties and dilemmas that anarchists have around what they call their "process". It is mistaken to constrict the notion of process into *decision-making* process. Questions about process include asking whether something needs to get "decided on" at all, and if so, by whom and in what kind of setting. Actually, by this word anarchists refer to the broader process of goal-oriented communication and coordination that is taking place in the movement. If attention to access differentials means looking at the "what" of power, then attention to something like "process", broadly understood, means looking at the "how" of power. To ask about the "how" of power is to ask about its interactional aspect, about the way anarchists go about the dynamic activity of organising. Some of the most troublesome questions arising here involve the ways in which anarchists germinate their schemes and plots. This happens most often in the intimate and, for some, unaccountable setting of friendship networks and fluid affinity groups.

Before approaching the issue at its substantive level, three clarifications need to be made. The first concerns decentralisation as a functional principle of the anarchist movement. The second concerns the distinction between coercion and enforcement, and the incompatibility of the latter with diffuse social sanctions. The third concerns enforcement as the line in the sand between anarchism and democracy.

Decentralisation

In the previous chapter, the discussion was left off with elusive "resources" such as charisma and initiative, and their role will continue to be examined below. First, however, some markers need to be set regarding the basic arena in which anarchist interaction takes place. The "rules of the game" in anarchist organising are very different from those obtaining in the public sphere at large, and this difference is much of what causes unclarity and confusion in thinking about the exercise of power form in anarchist optic. Some initial clarity can be afforded by looking more closely at a familiar anarchist concept, "decentralisation", especially asking what the relationship is between decentralisation as a "value" and decentralisation as a *de-facto* functional principle.

Decentralisation is often cited in anarchists' discussions about the question I just mentioned, "does matter X need to get decided, and by whom". This question is often confronted in large anarchist meetings, and the following account is based on participant observation in the bi-monthly meetings of the *Dissent!* network, which organised against the recent G8 meeting in Scotland. In those meetings, reference was very often made to "decentralisation" in proposing not to make a decision on X. Some of this was because of fatigue: large meetings are very boring affairs, and the consensus process that is a mainstay of decision-making in anarchist political culture makes strong demands on one's attention. Whether consciously or by default, however, the space for decision-making on a network-wide level would seem to have been very small. Most of the activity that happened within the network's fold was the province of largely autonomous affinity groups, working groups and individual networkers. But even if it was only an excuse, decentralisation was still expressed as a principle, as a value, or at least as a widely accepted rule of thumb. Sometimes an activist would say something to the effect that "a plenary shouldn't micromanage the smaller groups; we should trust people to get on with their plans and projects as long as they're working within the principles of unity". So here decentralisation was seen to imply autonomy within some defined perimeters, typically the "principles of unity" (in the case of *Dissent!* it was the PGA hallmarks). Decentralisation was often also cited as implying a principle of subsidiarity, as in "X should get decided on at the lowest appropriate scale". This, however, is a misleading notion. While subsidiarity is an important principle for promoting the economic and social autonomy of communities, it has little meaning in a fluid network that has neither a geographical location as such, nor a centre, nor a vertical structure. In such a setting it is hard to understand what "scale" could mean.

Take the following observed scenario: a network plenary is discussing such things as transport or legal support. People in the meeting cite "decentralisation" and agree that these decisions should be made in a working group. At the same time, these working groups have network-wide roles and members from around the country, and thus happen on the same "scale" as the plenary. Nothing about them is "local" — what they are is centres of power.

To describe what is happening one could say that the plenary, a temporary "centre" of collective power or influence in the network (which only exists in its bi-monthly convocations) is "seeding" several new "centres". What is actually happening is that people have a new story in their heads about who does what. But what we can now see is that *if* we are talking about centres, then what makes for decentralisation is not less of them but more. When people say they want "decentralisation", the grammar of the word would let us think they want a process that undoes (de-) something else, either a process or a condition of centralisation — of aggregation of power in few places. The interpretation of decentralisation in the plenary is that it means that there

should be a process to increase the number of "places" (face-to-face or virtual) where power gets exercised, while avoiding disproportionate aggregations of power, and/or transferring existing ones into the new locales (a principle of equality enacted on an increasing number of recipients).

This formula, however, does not distinguish between different kinds of power. It can be made to accommodate power-over as a legitimate recipient of decentralisation, rather than of abolition. In order to further sharpen the difference, let us isolate decentralisation of power-over. Imagine that the central committee of the ruling communist party of the People's Republic of Titoslavija has decided for whatever reason to decentralise their use of power-over, giving provincial authorities more autonomy vis. the central government (in economic planning, for instance). It does not matter that the province authorities are themselves hierarchically organised and single-party — democracy or not, this is still decentralisation. But in such a case, the transfer of power to new centres would necessitate two things. First, it would need to be clearly defined and managed, setting up protocols for the execution of new functions and services by the provincial authorities, training new officials and so on. Second, it would require some kind of legitimation mechanism, like an amendment to the party constitution.

With anarchists, however, transfer of power to new centres goes unmanaged and unlegitimated. In practice, what typically happens with the creation of new centres or places of power is that by the time the plenary meets, a number of people willing to volunteer their time and effort to moving these things forward will have already formed working groups, open for others to join. In this example, then, the plenary's "decision" to "decentralise" boils down to an advertisement for a *fait accompli*. This raises the question of legitimation. At first, one would think that the fact that the plenary has agreed that the creation of working groups is good constitutes some kind of ratification, and thus a legitimising mechanism. But what if the working groups simply announced their existence, without seeking to generate discussion in the plenary? Unless the purpose of the group sounded strange or controversial individuals were involved, the announcement would pass without discussion (at most with a few questions for clarification). In other words, people would see the same "legitimacy" in the working groups, if it can even be called that, whether or not they explicitly gave their consent in a plenary. It is difficult to see how the *membership* of the working group is in any way consented to, since the question of delegation and mandate is very tricky here. "Membership" in the working group is open for people to join, and can change at any time. Unlike in Titoslavija, then, who joins the working groups is not managed, but generated by individuals without further oversight.

What this discussion of the anarchist culture of decentralisation reveals is that, while often addressed as a value, decentralisation is also an "organising principle" of the anarchist movement in an *empirical* sense. The movement is already observably decentralised. Furthermore, as we have just seen, closer attention reveals that activists tend to reproduce this form of organisation by default. What I would go further to suggest is that this deeply ingrained culture of decentralisation rests on the fact that it is *structurally inevitable*. This is because of "the elephant in the room" so often ignored during discussions of anarchist process: the absence of enforcement.

Between Enforcement and Coercion

The concept of "enforcement" introduced here is absent from the typologies of power reviewed in the previous chapter. Enforcement is meant as a particular variant of a related term, "coercion".

The latter, we have said, is the extraction of compliance through a threat of deprivation. Now anarchists should not be expected to say that they want a society "without coercion" as such, or that they wouldn't use coercion themselves. If someone attacks me, today or in an "anarchist society", I will certainly coerce them to stop. Social transformation will also likely involve some forms of non- defensive coercion, against owners for example (on violence see chapter 8). Even in the hunter-gatherer and horticultural communities that many anarchists look up to for cues on non-hierarchical living, there exists the use of "diffuse social sanctions" — shunning, marginalisation, exclusion — whose application or threat coerce sociable behaviour to some extent (Barclay 1990).

Enforcement, on the other hand, is coercion which has two additional attributes. First, it is rationalised and institutionalised. Enforcement is coercion that follows formal procedures and guidelines, such that both the victim and the perpetrator know what behaviours are expected from them. It is usually a form of coercion against which society considers it illegitimate and/ or illegal to defend oneself, that is, it is attached to a legal/rational form of *de-facto* political authority (Weber 1958). Second, it is coercion where the threat is permanent. The means and protocols for enforcement are constantly available to the enforcer. The coercer, without further specification, may have to "invent" their own means and strategy for coercion. Both of these aspects differentiate enforcement from coercion as a sporadic or diffuse phenomenon.

Clearly anarchists "object" to enforcement — it is, after all, the stuff of the state. However, what often goes unnoticed is that anarchists can and do use coercion, in the form of diffuse social sanctions — gossip, marginalisation, the refusal to work with someone, or public displays of distrust. Social sanctions are threatening to the degree that it is costly for a person to pollute their relations with other members of a group or, ultimately, to leave it. Marginalisation as a result of falling out with a bunch of anarchists may not seem very costly — compared to the threats issued by the state, or even to diffuse sanctions in a tribal community, where one's survival may depend on cooperation. However, the cost is neither zero nor insignificant — it could only be so if there were no purpose in participating in the movement. For example, there is often a large degree of overlap between activists' political milieu and their social one, with one's comrades being the bulk of one's friends. An individual thus also faces the cost of drifting to the periphery of their social milieu, losing friendship ties and opportunities for social interaction with like-minded people outside the activist circle. This cost is larger, the more of one's friends are activists, and smaller to the degree that individual friendship ties that were created through activism can continue.

The point, however, is that whereas social sanctions may constitute a form of coercion (which anarchists may have other reasons not to object to "as such",) they are hardly something on which an edifice of *enforcement* could be built. Social sanctions, taken on their own, do not easily yield to the permanence and rationalisation entailed by enforcement. They are of their nature employable in a sporadic and diffuse way. Beyond social ones, the available sanctions that can be exercised in a networked social movement are next to nil. Anarchists have no army or police, nor means of mobilising economic sanctions against each other. When it comes to the rub of it, among activists there are hardly any resources for A to prevent B from doing something B strongly wants to do, or for A to make B do something they B strongly refuses to do. There is certainly no way to institutionalise the mobilisation of these scant resources.

The lack of appropriate sanctions, then, makes institutionalised coercion not only undesirable for anarchists in their politics, but structurally impossible. This is important; because where there

is *a priori* no enforcement, there can only be anarchy. Human relations in activist networks will follow anarchist patterns almost by default. The movement is doing a pretty good job at prefiguring anarchist relations simply because enforcement is entirely absent from its structures, and inevitably so. Perhaps this is only possible in the thin air of the activist movement's dislocated activities, untested in the more messy ground of community living, food production etc. I am not asking whether this absolute non-enforcement can or can't work in an anarchist *society* where relations encompass all areas of like (I think it can, to the degree that there is ease of mobility between communities, making the cost of secession low). But what cannot be denied is that as far as the contemporary movement is concerned, decentralisation and autonomy are just facts, and they're there because the lack of possibility for enforcement stands the entirety of anarchist activities on the basis of purely voluntary association.

Anarchism and Democracy

Once we shift our understanding of anarchist process in this way, we are able to shift what most clouds our thinking over process — the continued couching of the debate in democratic terms. While there are major parallels between some of the values animating activists' collective process practices and those which feature in contemporary democratic discourse — especially around "participation", "inclusion" and "deliberation" — there is still a fundamental difference between the coordinates of the debate. Democratic discourse assumes without exception that the political process results, at some point, in collectively binding decisions. That these decisions are legitimised — even under stringent conditions of broad participation and free and open debate (Gould 1988, Cohen 1998) — does not change the fact that the outcome is seen to have a mandatory nature. Saying that something is collectively binding makes no sense if each person is to make up their own mind over whether they are bound by it. Binding means enforceable, and enforceability is a background assumption of democracy. But the outcomes of anarchist process are inherently impossible to enforce. That is why the process is not "democratic" at all, since in democracy the point of equal participation in determining decisions is that this is what legitimates these decisions' subsequent enforcement. Anarchism, then, represents not the most radical form of democracy, but altogether a different paradigm of collective action.

Thus the status of "decisions" in an anarchist setting becomes fundamentally questionable. Let us look at the circumstantial conditions of such decisions in the anarchist movement — at the consensus process that activists almost universally employ. Much has been written about the mechanics of consensus decision-making, its difference from unanimity, and the intrinsic values that activists see in such a process — the provision for qualified veto as manifest respect for the individual, and the facilitated discussion process as encouraging creative overcoming of differences or coexistence despite them (Coover et.al. 1977, Butler and Rothstein 1998, Herndon 2001). Elsewhere I have considered the cultural practice of hand-signalling that accompanies consensus process, pointing to several forms of "soft majoritarianism" that it implies (Gordon 2002). What is more rarely asked is what the function of the consensus process actually is. One author sees it as a ritualised political machine, coaxing people through "facilitation" and rephrasing into the illusion of assent (Difference Engine 2005). Thus consensus is said to function as a bogus legitimation mechanism:

> It is impossible not to perceive within the consensus model of organization the legacy of decisionistic, constitutionalist sovereignty. The theory of consensus stands on this metapolitical ground — a founding act, a power, establishes the field within which properly constituted action is not only possible but demanded. Here the legitimacy of the decision making model, the fact that it is a vessel for the purportedly higher ideal of universal agreement, serves as the constitutive factor, the ground for legitimation…Understood as the point of liberation as such, consensus politics becomes the theatre of citizenship, in which the founding myth of the nobility and social contract is enacted ad nauseum [sic], forever situating itself against them, those who would have authority imposed without grounds.

Indeed, inasmuch as people *look* to consensus for legitimation they are party to a democratic hangover. But what if we acknowledge the point about non-enforcement, making the need tor democratic legitimacy disappear? Under such a new set of parameters, features such as consensus can be explained not only as embodying anarchist principles (valuing everyone's voice and concerns, and addressing them in a manner that departs from the adversarial, competitive model of politics), nor only as an artefact of political culture (which contributes to the reproduction of a distinct collective political identity), but also as performing important *functional* roles in the production of concrete results of the political process. In a system that is thoroughly predicated on voluntary association, compliance with collective decisions is also voluntary. Consensus is the only thing that makes sense when minorities are under no obligation or sanction to comply, because consensus increases the *likelihood* that a decision will be voluntarily carried out by those who made it.

Such an outlook also enables us to look differently at the function of spokespeople, delegates or representatives in the anarchist movement. If we assume that what representatives decide among themselves will then *have* to be followed by those they represent, then we will obviously want to ask who gave these representatives their mandate, and what are its nature and scope. We would perhaps consider it good practice for "spokes" to arrive at the meeting with a "starting position" based on earlier consensus in their own group, and to have some guidelines from their group as to how flexible one can be. We may also be strict and expect that for such a decision to be legitimate, it would have to be ratified by the local groups. All of these would indeed make the decision more democratic, but only because they are mitigating factors to the basic presence of enforcement. If this were the case, anarchists are not doing very well at all at being "democratic", because delegates to spokescouncils are rarely given a specific mandate, nor do they get elected. Usually those who have the time and money to travel to a meeting do so, and at the meeting itself nobody even checks which local groups are represented. But the spokespeople can have no way of having their decision enforced — and thus they require no legitimacy. At most, a spokescouncil is a useful mechanism for banging heads together — generating "decisions" for which the spokespeople can *anticipate* that the individuals not present will voluntarily follow. A spokescouncil's consensus will be practicable to the degree that the spokes are being literally "representative" of the rest of the moment. This means not that they are appointed to make decisions on someone else's behalf, but that they think like others think, and are likely to raise and resolve the issues that others would raise. Again, the resulting consensus is of practicable utility simply because it generates not a decision but what essentially remains a proposal, while ensuring through discussion a high

likelihood of voluntary acceptance from other people not present in the meeting, because their concerns will have already been anticipated in the shaping of the "decision"-proposal.

The confrontation with non-enforceability, then, reveals that "the point of decision" is a red herring for our attention to the functioning of influence. Without enforcement, decision becomes a fuzzy concept and can as easily be seen as a matter of consultation and arrangement. Where the dilemmas around process really occur is around the operation of influence outside any formal "decision-making" structures, which is the bulk of everyday anarchist organising. Concerns around this essentially invisible and behind-the-scenes exercise of influence are much more pertinent to anarchists' discussions. They involve the autonomous nature of wielding power-with, like the instance above in which a working group had already been set up without asking anybody. Another dimension is added when one finds that, within large networks, there tends to be a fluid but identifiable sub-network of people who more habitually realise their access to power-with, and not very publicly so. The existence of such sub-networks or leadership *groups* has caused a great deal of anxiety for anarchists, not least so for those who have found themselves within one. Many activists are familiar with this dynamic and its accompanying concerns for accountability. However, to begin the discussion we should take a detour to clear away, once and for all, a cataract of misperception that has unfortunately become trenchant in many anarchists' thinking about this kind of power.

The Tyranny of Structurelessness Reconsidered

Similar to another expression, "lifestyle anarchism", the idea of a "tyranny of structurelessness" is often invoked in the anarchist movement with little or no familiarity with the original argument that grounded it (for the former see Bookchin 1994, Black 1998). While what we must ultimately confront is the looser sense in which anarchists use the expression, it would be worthwhile to look first at the original. *The Tyranny of Structurelessness* (henceforth *TToS*) is an essay written by sociologist Jo Freeman under the pen-name Joreen. The essay argues that the alleged impasse in women's liberation derives from the fact that feminist consciousness-raising groups have elevated the lack of formal structures and responsibilities in their activities to the level of an unquestioned dogma (Freeman 1970, cf. Freeman 1975). This commitment to "structurelessness", however, enables informal hierarchical structures to emerge and perpetuate themselves within groups: a class of leaders who constitute an in- group, a network of personal friends within the larger group, while those who are not in this network constitute an out-group which remains disempowered. To perpetuate their status, in-groups create criteria by which people in the larger group are judged, and limit their participation to prescribed roles or channels. The lack of formal structure, Freeman says,

> becomes a smokescreen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others. This hegemony can easily be established because the idea of 'structurelessness' does not prevent the formation of informal structures, but only formal ones…The rules of how decisions are made are known only to a few and awareness of power is curtailed by those who know the rules, as long as the structure of the group is informal. Those who do not know the rules and are not chosen for initiation must remain in confusion, or suffer from paranoid delusions that something is happening of which they are not quite aware.

Freeman thinks that unless a movement for change can' overcome this problem, it will not develop but become inward-looking, trapped in sterile rituals and dominated by elites. If groups continue deliberately not to select who shall exercise power and influence within them, they abdicate the right to demand that those who do so be responsible for it. Without formal structure, inequalities develop: some are free to act without reference to the group, while others find themselves blocked at every turn.

The solution that Freeman proposes is to acknowledge that inequalities are inescapable, but to formalise group structures so that the hierarchies they generate are constituted democratically. Positions which incur authority and decision-making power should be delegated by election, consciously distributed among many participants, rotated often, and include a requirement to be responsible to the group. Information must be diffused widely and frequently, and everyone should have equal access to the group's money or equipment. As a result, "the group of people in positions of authority will be diffuse, flexible, open and temporary".

Let me note in passing that the suggestive comparison to Robert Michels' famous essay "The Iron Law of Oligarchy" is mistaken. Michels (1911) was referring to the formation of oligarchies in mass-based organisations (particularly working-class parties) which already have formal structures. His argument is about the tendency of the people occupying positions within such structures to become a self-reproducing elite group, destroying the democratic aspirations of the party. In this sense his arguments in fact *refute* Freeman's expectations towards the redeeming qualities of large-scale, formal structures.

Some anarchists, often of the "big-A" or "old school" disposition, cite *TToS* in support of their strong bias towards formal organisation, especially in the form of the traditional anarchist model of bottom-up federation. Most are ambivalent about Freeman's ideas, acknowledging the problem she identifies but shying away from her conclusions. Indeed, the main thrust of anarchist-inspired critiques of Freeman's position has been to reject her conclusions about formalising authority within groups, without, however, mounting a formal challenge of her analysis. In a targeted rebuttal from an anarcha-feminist perspective, Cathy Levine insists that acknowledging elites and formalising them is an unacceptable concession to the ossified patterns of the traditional left, which she associates with precisely the patriarchal world-view which women's movements (and anarchists, for that matter) are dedicated to overcoming. She defends the voluntary association model of organising, and emphasises the need for the development of a radical milieu whose culture respects, nurtures and sustains people, and avoids the bleak mechanisation that characterises formal structures. "What we definitely don't need is more structures and rules, providing us with easy answers, pre-fab alternatives and no room in which to create our own way of life. What is threatening the female Left…is the "tyranny of tyranny", which has prevented us from relating to individuals, or from creating organisations in ways that do not obliterate individuality with prescribed roles, or from liberating us from capitalist structure" (Levine undated [1970s]). Jason McQuinn (2002) goes on to argue that the problems Freeman associates with structureless groups are as prevalent, if not more so, in formally-structured organisations:

> It's much more common (because it's probably a hell of a lot easier) for "the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others" by starting or taking over formal organizations. After all why bother with blowing "smokescreens" to hide a shaky hegemony over a small, informal group when it's easier to insinuate yourself into powerful roles in formal organizations?…People who allow themselves

to be dominated in informal groups will also allow themselves to be dominated in formal groups — and probably more easily and often in the latter simply because a structure for domination is going to be much more often present from the outset!

These counter-arguments may be valid, but they do not help us come up with a fresh approach to the problem. And there is a problem, otherwise it is hard to explain why the idea of a *ToS*, and sometimes the essay itself, enjoy such enduring popularity among activists. The essay appeals to the basic intuition that something is wrong with the dynamics which groups sometimes develop. To address this "something" in other terms might be easier if we focus, not on the proposals, but on the basic premises and reasoning of *TToS*. Freeman's argument has six components:

1. The problem consists in the existence of an elite (or several competing ones) within the larger activist group.
2. An informal elite is "nothing more and nothing less" than a friendship network within the larger group — whether it pre-exists it or forms within it.
3. An elite's emergence and reproduction is caused by the lack of formal structures for communication and decision-making in the group. In their absence, a communication vacuum is created and it is filled by the informal interactions which the members of the friendship group maintains *as friends*, whether outside the group's meetings or as a privileged space of discussion during them.
4. Furthermore, a dependence is created: only informal elites retain the *capacity* to make decisions and oversee them carried out, because they concentrate the necessary information, resources etc. which are not shared by the group.
5. Since an elite is unlikely to renounce its power, even if challenged, "the only other alternative is formally to structure the group in such a way that the original [i.e. the existing] power is institutionalised…If the informal elites have been well structured and have exercised a fair amount of power in the past, such a task is feasible".
6. As the informal elites become formal ones, rules for democratic control are introduced (delegation, information sharing) which are intended to broaden participation and make positions of power more accountable.

Since Levine and McQuinn primarily challenge points 5 and 6, the focus here will be on the earlier ones. The first two statements, to begin with, are not necessarily true. People who enjoy internal positions of influence within a group may do so as individuals, without necessarily functioning as a group in itself. One person may have a dominant position because s/he argues forcefully and aggressively, another because s/he has sole access to a certain resource, such as a printing press or a megaphone, and a third because s/he is the only one who has a certain skill, such as accounting or Internet research. Such a set-up does not require the individuals in question to even communicate with each other regularly — it is enough that each of them is in a position to exercise unaccountable influence over everyone else in his or her own way. Second, such people are not necessarily friends. On a large-scale level of a network like dissent!, for example, there is an identifiable leadership group, but while some of them are intimate friends, others have a

relationship that can be better described as based on trust and mutual fondness. Some of them are happy to organise together but can't stand each other socially. Alternately, in a relatively small and stable collective, the friendship group may entirely overlap the collective, but *still* display internal patterns of exclusion or domination. These patterns more often cut across each other than being arranged around more-or-less clear boundaries between sub-groups. People can all be "friends" with each other but still have issues in their relationships.

More basically, it is questionable how much validity the concept of friendship- elites actually has, since there are serious differences between what each type of group is like. In order to function, an elite of the kind portrayed in *TToS* would seem to require quite a stable membership and smooth relationships between its members. Otherwise, it would be hard for it to function as a forum for political coordination, especially within a larger group that it needs constantly to manipulate. But groups of friends very rarely work like that. Within such groups, people have different kinds of friendships with each other (best friends, good friends, mates, lovers…), creating a complex network of ties that is very rarely monolithic. Moreover, the "activist lifestyle" in the West can also mean that these groups have a very fluid nature: people burn-out, fall out with each other, make new friends, migrate a lot etc. — things that often happen among friends who aren't activists as well. These considerations do not make for denying that the protagonist of *TToS* analysis — the friendship-elite — is never a reality. The problem may take the form of a smaller group (of friends) dominating the larger group, and Freeman's analysis is clearly relevant to her own experiences in the women's movement (Freeman 1976). What is denied here, however, is the portrayal of the friendship-elite as some kind of First Cause lying at "the" root of the problem, which tags the circumstantial as essential.

The focus on antagonistic groups — "ins" and "outs", "informal elites" and "confused flock" — not only sets strict limits to the relevance of the analysis in *TToS* , but also also exposes its highly-problematic methodological premises. *TToS* is a strongly structuralist account, in the sociological sense of the word. It approaches its object (in this case, the collective) as a system, and attempts to analyse how this system is structured. It is only in terms of the system's formal and informal rules that structuralist analysis proceeds, while the wills and designs of the people who inhabit the system have a less significant place in the analysis than these structural dimensions. Thus friendship-elites "are not conspiracies", but the result of inescapable structural factors. Structuralism may be of some use for the analysis of mass society or impersonal bureaucracies, but it is hardly appropriate for face-to-face settings where, after all, a great deal of direct communication takes place. In particular, such a strong version of structuralism invites the charge that it is overly deterministic in its view of the relationship between underlying structures and the behaviour of the human beings placed within them. It brackets, for example, the possibility of corrective agency on part of the leaders, who may realise their position is problematic and take steps to rectify the situation. The misapplication also leads to the paradox whereby the informal elites are supposed to be hidden behind a "smokescreen" and are at the same time readily observable to "anyone with a sharp eye and an acute ear". Unless the latter organs are the sole provision of the social scientist, it is hard to see how an informal elite, based on friendship and enabled by structurelessness, could remain hidden or survive criticism for any extended period.

The dependence of *TToS* on the paraphernalia of 1960s "value free" social science also limits the scope of its questions. The only available type of value- judgement within the essay's framework is how successfully groups fulfil their goals — in this case, building a strong feminist movement. As a result, all its criticisms of elites revolve around the question of efficiency. First, the prerequi-

sites for being part of an informal elite are "background, personality and allocation of time. They do not include one's competence, dedication to feminism, talents or potential contribution to the movement". Second, there isn't space for all good ideas: "People listen to each other because they like them, not because they say significant things". Finally elites "have no obligations to be responsible to the group at large". All the while, nothing is ever said in critique of elites as such — only of their non-meritocratic constitution. The pre-requisites for membership are precisely the resources which we had anxieties about on page 21. However, they are not seen as inherently problematic, only as disproportionately important. Even the "tyranny" is not attributed to elite groups; it is attributed to the structurelessness itself, which creates a "tyrannical" setting because it becomes a self-propagated myth while obscuring the "real issues" that *TToS* claims to expose.

Accountability

While both the analysis and recommendations of TToS turn out to be unsatisfactory, a case still remains to be answered. The essay was, after all, directed at explaining and addressing a problem with which activists are thoroughly familiar — otherwise it is hard to account for the continued vernacular popularity among activists of the *expression* "tyranny of structurelessness", though not the actual content of the essay. The premise of *TToS* appeals to a basic intuition that something is wrong with the dynamics that groups sometimes develop.

Argentinian activist Ezequiel Adamovsky gives a good example of this concern in discussing the current state of the autonomous neighbourhood assemblies that formed after the 2001 crisis in Argentina. He reports that the network of assemblies has diminished widely, at all but a very small and localized level. He thinks this is partly because the horizontalism that characterized the emergence of the assemblies had been so focused on rejection — of power pyramids and a hierarchical division of labour — that no positive groundwork for coordination could be established. This failure led to the disintegration of some of the autonomous initiatives, as activists resorted either to "old certainties", the drive to build a worker's party, or became comfortably isolated into very small circles of familiarity without the capacity to articulate the struggle with the larger society (cited in Kaufman 2005). Kaufman further associates the breakdown of the *assambleas* with the lack of "a transparent distribution of tasks and clear democratic decision-making method…The fear of delegating responsibility becomes a kind of privileged voluntarism: whoever has the connections and time, both elements of privilege, to get something done does it. The intended avoidance of hierarchical leadership leads to an open denial of power but [allows] a nameless and invisible informal structure of power where charisma or well-connectedness becomes the defining factor for emerging leadership. In movement politics, unstructured 'open space' becomes a shady stand-in for democratic process".

Ultimately, what motivates both Freeman and Kaufman who invokes her, as well as the similar (and similarly misguided) proposals of Bookchin (Biehl and Bookchin 1998) and the Platform revivalists (cf. Makhno et.al. 1926), is a legitimate concern: the felt need to have some way of monitoring, checking and making visible the operations of influence within purposefully anti-authoritarian groupings. Many activists find it disempowering when projects they are involved with are influenced without their knowledge, or when they find themselves taking part in actions and projects which they don't know who initiated and currently navigates. Being put in a situation whose history of coming into being is opaque, and whose further development of is

only marginally in one's control — this may be the norm in environments like the army, workplace or school, but activists are right in thinking that they should not be the norm in anarchist organising where the aim is to actualise alternatives to present forms of social organisation. It is disconcerting to feel that reality is being shaped around one without one's input, and in a process hidden from one's view.

What many responses to these concerns have in common is that they advocate reforms in movement structures and processes, and amplify two themes: (a) Responsibility should be delegated, clearly-mandated and recallable; and (b) Influence in the movement should be exercised as visibly as possible. The end-goal towards which both proposals steer is often referred to as "accountable" relationships. This is also a word that is often heard among activists when discussing the issues we are dealing with here. There is no doubt of the earnest intentions of those who raise these proposals in talking about process. Many activists who have encountered a group which has fallen under the sway of a few strong personalities will acknowledge the sources of (a), and those familiar with repeated concerns around the workings of the UK EF! network or the global PGA process (Non-Network Sans Titre 2002) will understand the sources of (b). Accountable power relations is the agenda that animates *TToS*, as well as Bookchin's "formal *structures* and *regulations* that can effectively *control* and *modify* the activities of leaders" (Bookchin 2003). It is not the only agenda, since both Freeman and Bookchin tend to represent *effectiveness* as a primary goal for formalising structures. However, in terms of the current discussion — as well as regarding the concrete motivations of present-day activists — accountability is the meaningful focus.

The most obvious problem with these proposals, as I have said, is that they are utterly impractical — they amount to asking the movement to entirely change its political culture, placing itself in an entirely unfamiliar mould that needs to be learned and followed against one's habits. It also means the effective stoppage of the movement's natural fluidity in order to adapt it to rationalised structures, losing the advantages of high connectivity and rapid generation of action afforded by decentralised, networked forms of organisation. However, for those who pursue accountability, the fact that anarchists seem to be so comfortable with their current habits is thus seen as regrettable, a barrier to having a responsible and serious politics. What they do not stop to countenance is the possibility that anarchists may be on to something here. Fundamentally, then, I would now like to argue that accountability is by itself a problematic goal from an anarchist perspective. This position would necessarily render problematic the formal structures that are to generate accountability, constituting a more up-stream argument against formal structures than end-of-pipeline objections to the machinations of these structures once in place.

The concept of accountability has a great deal of currency from the position of movements for social change. Many activists talk about holding corporations accountable for their abuses, or about holding politicians accountable to the public. Anarchists, who believe that corporations and politicians should be abolished, might have less use for such a concept — but even with them it retains some rhetorical strength in the immediate term. In the case of both corporations and politicians, this is because the demand for accountability is directed towards an entity that is *more* powerful than the source of the demand. Anarchists do not intuitively feel that there is a problem with establishing a corrective mechanism for mitigating the possible abuses of that entity's disproportionate power, as long as it exists. So one must always clarify *who* is said to be accountable to *whom*, for *what?* Of course, accountability just as often flows the other way around: we also say that a worker is accountable to their boss, in which case accountability re-

inforces hierarchy rather than mitigating it. In such a case anarchists would view the concept negatively. The contrast between these cases sharpens the often-neglected point that accountability, as such, does not imply a given directionality of power-relations (top-down, bottom-up or even horizontal). Rather, we need to define it in a way that can be attached to any of the three.

What does accountability, as a relationship between two agents, most basically consist in? Looking at top-down accountability and *in particular* to the kind of bottom- up accountability that anarchists support when they say they want to "hold corporations accountable", we should understand that our notion of accountability tends to include exerting certain behaviours from agents (e.g. making Dow Chemicals pay for Bhopal or, equally, making it cease to exist) through *demands backed by sanctions*. In a relationship between any two agents A and B, A is accountable to B if and only if B has the ability to impose sanctions on A in case of B's dissatisfaction with A's activities. Accountability can obtain in hierarchical relationships but still work from the bottom up, where A is an elected official and B is the electing body which can either recall A or vote for someone else next time, effectively threatening a sanction (this is what Freeman or Bookchin would propose). It can also operate hierarchically from the top down, of course, where A is a clerk and B is the head of her department who can fire her. Accountability can also work horizontally, as in a centre-right model of decentralised government where different branches of government are accountable to one another (Behn 2000 — in this model decentralised government is not, of course, decentrally accountable "bottom-up" to a participatory democratic polity). Such a sanction-based definition is generic, then, and obtains irrespective of whether or not the relationship between *A* and *B* is hierarchical, and of the direction of this hierarchy if there is one.

It may somehow be argued, that a different concept of accountability can be formulated specifically for non-hierarchical "power-with", where the only "sanctions" are bottom-up towards elected representatives and delegates, or horizontal ones against peers, and which do not go beyond withdrawal of responsibilities or trust. Under such strict conditions would anarchists then be able to accept sanctions? Perhaps, but under a number of additional conditions — that the introduction of elected responsibility and delegation would be agreed to, easy to integrate and not become a slippery slope under which the original set of conditions would be eroded. Circumstantially, the bet already seems to be a bad one.

But even if accountability did not involve sanctions at all, it would still have its own precondition. Sanctions or not, A cannot be accountable to *B* in any sense if *B* does not *know* about the actions of A. Applied to the present context, what the issue really boils down to after all these detours is to the *visibility* of influence in anarchist networks. There core of all these dilemmas can be found around the influence that anarchists use invisibly, behind the scenes — where those affected may never know who had the influence, and how they conspired to use it.

The Forum and the Campfire

There are two "problems" with invisibility for those who would do away with it. The first is that they must acknowledge that in some cases it is a necessity, however unfortunate, as with actions that require secrecy in order to happen, although they inevitably effect other people who did not participate in organising them. The second is that there is an important sense in which anarchists would be drawn to value positively the existence of invisible power within their own movement, based on a feminist and anti-racist critique of privileged fora for influence.

The first, "security" dilemma consists in the fact that many times, a small group of activists may wield, at least at a given time, a great deal of influence inside the movement. These moments of influence are, on the one hand, central to the organisational dynamics of movement itself, and on the other hand are simply not capable of being integrated into any model of accountability due to what most blatantly makes for invisibility — necessary secrecy. When power is exercised in an *illegal* way, anarchists may or may not agree with the action it generates, and with the results it had for people other than the organisers — but they also cannot expect the organisers to be "transparent" about who will do what. The case of Reclaim the Streets (RTS) is a poignant example of the high-impact dynamic and its accompanying dilemmas. RTS originally formed in London in 1991, close to the dawn of the anti- roads movement, but entered its most prolific phase in the mid-90s through the organisation of mass, illegal street parties. The parties drew thousands of people, and fused together several agendas: the reclamation of urban space from the hands of developers; a critique of the automobile culture and climate change; and the drive to create spontaneous, unregulated "Situations" which display a qualitative break with normality (Situationist International 1971) or, in more recent terminology, "Temporary Autonomous Zones" wherein the presence of authority and capitalism is suspended (Hakim Bey 1985). The street-party phenomenon reached its climax on June 18th 1999, the first "global day of action" coinciding with the G8 summit in Cologne, when thousands of dancing people caused massive disruption in the City of London. As one organiser recounts, "the road became a stage for participatory ritual theatre…participatory because the street party has no division between performer and audience, it is created by and for everyone, it avoids all mediation, it is experienced in the immediate moment by all, in a spirit of face to face subversive comradeship" (Jordan 1998:141).

In terms of the dynamics taking place once the party has started, Jordan's argument about its participatory character may be accepted. However, many activists have taken issue with the degree to which the *organisation* of the parties was participatory or even visible. The events were staged entirely by a small core group of RTS activists, working full-time from an office in a London suburb and devising the plans to minute detail. The thousands who participated in the parties would just turn up at a designated meeting place without having any idea of what was about to happen. As Jordan (143–4) recounts, in one scenario

> thousands of people emerge from Shepherd's Bush tube station, no-one knows where they are going — the mystery and excitement of it all is electrifying. Shepherd's Bush Green comes to a standstill as people pour on to it…up ahead a line of police has already sealed off the roundabout…The crowd knows that this is not the place: where is the sound system, the tripods? Then, as if by some miracle of collective telepathy, everyone turns back and disappears around the corner; a winding journey through back streets, under railway bridges and then up over a barrier and suddenly they are on an enormous motorway and right *behind* the police lines…The ecstatic crowd gravitates towards the truck carrying the sound system which is parked on the hard shoulder…The crowd roars — we've liberated a motorway through sheer numbers, through people power!

No "miracle of collective telepathy" took place here. There were several activists from the RTS core group who took on leading the crowd to the tarmac, in a carefully planned tactical manoeuvre which none of the thousands of attendants knew about in advance. The idea of a

handful of activists wielding so much influence over a crowd, however willing, has given many anarchists cause for alarm. It is important to emphasise that nobody was coerced — you didn't *have* to turn up at the event.

However, once you turned up you were basically putting yourself in a situation where you did not have the space to control what was happening around you. Police attacks, injuries and arrests were not an uncommon feature of RTS events, and the organisers who created the situation have been deemed by some an irresponsible "cadre".

However, could they have acted otherwise? Putting together a successful RTS event seems to be inherently incompatible with a model of accountability. First, technically a discussion of the operation among a large number of people, each of which would of course have to have their say, would be time-consuming and endless. Second, and most obviously, the realities of police surveillance and potential repression under which RTS was operating ruled out the public delegation of decision-makers. The events *could only* be organised secretively by a small group.

It should be pointed out, however, that the RTS concept is also power-sharing because it is easy to imitate — indeed street parties proliferated through the late 90s in many other cities around the world — and thus serves as a transferable form of impact. The original RTS group was not building power, and its reality-changing capacity was something that anyone could potentially do by themselves. However, the tactic *itself* is inherently incompatible with visibility — and thus with accountability. That someone else can adopt the same tactic only creates another invisible space, so while there is no exclusive "ownership" of the RTS tactic it is still invisible even if it can proliferate.

The dilemma is that despite these dynamics, it is clear to anarchists that the RTS experience was immensely *valuable* — the small group of people who were doing this were anonymously propelling the movement into a huge phenomenon by applying such an innovative and "sexy" concept of direct action which was very inspiring and meaningful, politicised a large amount of people, and took direct action and civil disobedience very strongly into an urban setting.

Now the fall-back position would be to say that we can recognise some limitations to visibility, such as security issues, without giving it up as an ideal. Invisibility, then, becomes a matter of unfortunate necessity. However, what of the position that invisibility is positively valuable for other reasons than security?

Take the following scenario. Emma is an activist who lives in a town which has a strong and vibrant anarchist milieu. She has a great deal of experience and commitment, is a very empathic and caring person, and has many friends. She also regularly has many useful things to say about organising actions or projects. Emma also says she's uncomfortable speaking at large meetings. She believes that this is the result of deep-seated emotional patterns that derive from her socialisation as a woman, and finds confirmation for that analysis in the parallel experiences of many other woman activists, to the extent that women's workshops have been organised to address this issue. The experience of speaking in a large group of people is accompanied, for her, by a sense of unease or sometimes anxiety, something she has noticed that men do not suffer from nearly as much. When she has something to say she takes a lot of time to think it through, often speaking only if she sees no-one else is saying it, despite the fact that she knows her ideas are worthwhile and that the others respect and value her. As a result, Emma says she much prefers to offer her ideas to people informally, in personal or small group conversations. When she has a good idea for an action, or some strong opinion about how some resources should be allocated, she prefers to speak about it with people she trusts, over a cup of herbal tea or taking a walk

in the park. She prefers to float an idea and see how it rolls along in the local milieu over arguing for it in the course of a formal meeting. Since her ideas are often very well thought out and since people trust her, Emma has in fact a great deal of influence on the course of events — she exercises power-with, and is sometimes clearly in a leadership position.

Emma's behaviour clearly does not fit into what we would consider as accountable exercise of influence. None of her power-use is transparent or visible to those she doesn't choose to show it. On the other hand, anarchists who have a strong critique of patriarchy will find it very hard to criticise the path that Emma has chosen in order to empower herself. Like many women (and men, and queers, and members of visible minorities), Emma is going to use power invisibly or not at all. To expect that she strive to "get over" her emotional patterns and feel empowered at meetings would be not only patronising, but sexist, because it brackets the conditions of patriarchy that engenders these patterns. The issue here is that the ideal of visibility privileges "the forum", or the public theatre of power. It makes the scope of accepted ways of moving things into motion depend on their degree of visibility, be it on the network-wide level or on the level of a local milieu. But, as I have shown, the forum, the venue for visible wielding of influence in the public sphere, is very problematic. In terms of the discussion in the previous part, it should be seen that exercising power-with in the confines of the forum requires precisely those resources which are most difficult to share — confidence, articulation, charisma. Not only that, but these resources *only become* inequality-generating ones in formal and assemblary venues of decision- making. Because it is so difficult to share this resource, and because its current distribution strongly reflects patterns of domination in society, the only way to equalise the access to influence it generates is *to minimise its relevance as a resource*, to reduce the volume of instances in which it matters to have it. But the real point is that the forum reproduces patriarchy. Things like public confidence are precisely what patriarchy tends to deny many women. Attaching the acceptable use of to the forum, with its visibility, fixes the goal-posts in a way that is disadvantageous to many women. While anarchist networks may well be a supportive environment for self- deprogramming and empowerment, as matters stands it is unfair to say to a woman "you have to get self confidence" as a condition for participation. Why does she have to make a special effort to change in order to participate on equal footing just because she is a woman living under patriatchy? At the same time, privileging the forum erases and de-legitimises the manifold forms of micro-power that women have developed in response to patriarchy, and the ways in which many people find it most comfortable to empower themselves.

This means that anarchists are bound to acknowledge that this invisible, subterranean, indeed unaccountable process of power is not only inevitable in some measure (because of habit and secrecy), but also needs to be embraced, since it coheres with their world-view in important respects.

Power and Solidarity

The quest for accountability, then, arrives at a dead end. The political language ushered in by this agenda inevitably end ups challenging the status of invisible power, which is not only a practical necessity but also has intrinsic political value from a feminist perspective. Where, then, does this leave anarchist concerns about process? I have no presumptions about offering a full "resolution" here, but some of the properties of any such resolution can already be described.

First, there are necessary properties that a resolution would need to have in order to be actualised in anarchist networks — without which the entire discussion is irrelevant. What should be clear by now is that movement process is something that cannot be artificially re-designed according to certain principles, no matter how widely agreed. Around questions of process as around any other topic, anarchist agendas aren't "designed," they evolve in the gradual fruition of a collective consciousness, through the proliferation of shared cultural codes, informed by innumerable trial-and-error experiences, and transmitted through the high intensity network of verbal and symbolic communication between activists. Also, circumstantially, it is precisely because any widespread changes in anarchist movement process would *have* to be widely accepted, if they were to happen, that the stakes look very bad for the advocates of formal structures. For their proposals to be realised, the cultural momentum of a very rapidly developing networked politics would have to be reversed. This is unlikely, because people value informal networked organisation too much, along with its invisible power aspects which are impossible to disentangle from the entire package. Bookchin, on his own principles, will have to fall in with the considered choice of the majority.

To this we should add and stress that the promotion of any alteration in anarchist process is *by itself* an act of power, certainly if it is an organised initiative. Such exercises of organised influence around anarchist process already exist. The proliferation of consensus methodology, for example, is not merely the result of habit and momentum. It is also generated in a major way by workshops, which are constantly on-offer, for training people to use the method, as well as workshops on consensus in large groups, "quick consensus" during actions, training for facilitators and so on. Such activities are acts of deliberate influence on movement process, backed by the informed choices of those promoting consensus. There is, then, an ability to influence skilfully and intentionally the movement's process; not through "internal propaganda" but through autonomously-initiated discursive engagement; in other words, a form of direct action. Under the banner of direct action, people autonomously exercise power to initiate change, only now it is "at home" in the context of the movement's own activity. This kind of process-oriented "direct-action" is only one example of the prevailing way in which large-scale influence is exercised within networked movements, whereby agendas are formed, particular issues become central to mobilisation, action repertoires are invented and taken up elsewhere, and forms of political language and aesthetic become diffused among social movement actors. Instinctively savvy in the proliferation of cultural codes, groups of activists have been able to wield influence by mounting actions or initiatives that display a certain agenda, and hope that others are inspired and follow suit. This is precisely through such autonomous action that way in which the Zapatistas, Reclaim the Streets, the early Indymedia group and many others successfully made their impact on the evolution of the movement, often on a global scale.

Different practices and habits around process will only come about through such proliferation. The form of the resolution, then, could be described as the promotion of cultural codes around the exercise of influence. Not a code of conduct, but voluntarily habituated cultural orientations that would shape political behaviour. By itself, the practice of redistributing activist resources so as to equalise access to influence requires a culture of redistribution that makes it a matter of habit rather than book-keeping. As a proliferating cultural meme, individuals or groups could take initiative and informally suggest resource-sharing to others. If this practice "catches on", as colloquialisms and other cultural artefacts do, then resource-sharing will have become something that people keep in mind by default.

With the exercise of power, the emphasis on cultural change is also important because only it (unlike structures and protocols) is able to reach beyond what disguises itself as "decision-making" and into to the micro-level of informal power. Of the particular content of such cultural orientations little can be said in advance, since by definition only more pervasive reflection and experimentation will generate the actual cultural codes that would in reality be a response to concerns around process. The concrete questions that activists ask themselves when making decisions about exercising influence are inevitably situation-specific, and the cultural resources that they would mobilise to deal with them would be diverse and location-specific, as can be expected from freely-evolving praxis integral to anarchist political culture. What can be said with relative confidence is that such cultural resources would aid a reflective wielding of influence rather than uncritically experiencing the "trip" that often accompanies each new experience of empowerment, making actions participatory and/or easily copyable whenever possible, as well as encouraging consideration for the anticipated needs and desires of those who one's actions will inevitably effect unaccountably. Moreover, they would have to intersect meaningfully with the practices of resource-redistribution discussed in the previous chapter. Such a resolution is clearly far from "perfect" — influence will always be abused.

Another, more ambitious requirement can be made of the resolution: if anything were to modify the way in which one wields influence in anarchist organising — the "consideration" it is hoped one displays, for example — the modification would have to be there not as a restriction on freedom, but as its extension. Any anarchist cultural orientation to power would entail that people feel more empowered, encouraged and excited to create, initiate, do, make, and generally change reality — to exercise power. If reflective modifications to the exercise of influence are to be freedom-maximising *themselves* they would have to be actively desired, as an actualisation of things that activists value and want to actualise without seeing them as concessions. Under the most distilled conditions of voluntarism, then, the relevant question about such cultural orientations cannot concern their moral grounding as apodeictic practical law, but their *motivation* as reflective but habitual practices.

This motivation can be most readily found in the remaining member of the triad of concepts that have been a useful reference point for anarchists since the French Revolution. We have already talked about equality and freedom, now we can ask about solidarity. Notice, first of all, that unlike freedom which is, in all its definitions including those acceptable to anarchists, the *property* of an individual or a group, and unlike equality, which in all its definitions describes the result of a *comparison* between individuals or groups, solidarity is something else altogether: a *relationship* between persons and within and between groups, one that is based on a feeling of mutual identification. In one of the rare attempts to offer a general definition, Cohen and Arato (1992) have suggested that solidarity is "the ability of individuals to respond to and identify with one another on the basis of mutuality and reciprocity, without calculating individual advantages, and above all without compulsion. Solidarity involves a willingness to share the fate of the other, not as the exemplar of a category to which the self belongs but as a unique and different person". Solidarity can be amplified and actualised in practice to various degrees, for example in activists' choices about their use of influence, and it can also be actively promoted. But inasmuch as solidarity modifies behaviour, it does so as a positive motivation, not as a limiting duty, and this is what makes it the most obvious candidate for the motivation behind anarchists' adoption of a culture of reflection and consideration.

Something further needs to be said, in closing, about the form of solidarity that can be seen at work in such a culture. Following Segall (2004) but extending his distinctions, I would argue that solidarity can be understood in three broad ways. First, as the property of groups, which is the usual context for discussion in political theory — e.g. social solidarity in the nation state. What renders this form of solidarity inappropriate for present purposes is that it relies on stable criteria for membership (e.g. common citizenship, geographical location or language group), and — since it is universally discussed under assumptions which do not challenge the state — that it brackets social antagonism with the assumption that solidarity expresses some form of collective unity in liberal, republican or nationalist terms. A second type of solidarity is a relation between individuals (or groups) and a collective to which they definitely do *not* belong. Segall sees this form of solidarity as "sympathy towards, or *identification* with, a group that one is not a member of (at least not in the eyes of the outside world). To do something to convey solidarity with the other is to convey a message of oneness, or of mutuality of fate, with the other. Therefore, to act in solidarity here, is to act as if one was in a relationship of [group] solidarity with the other". This, however, reduces solidarity to its declarative or performative aspects — ignoring the kinds of concrete mutual aid behaviours, up to self-endangering — that "solidarity" also often includes. The third type of solidarity is both antagonistic, and exists in the tension between belonging and not-belonging that defies the supposed dichotomy between the first two forms. Where the first form glosses over social antagonism, *revolutionary* solidarity takes it as its starting point. Here the feeling of identification, and the mutuality and reciprocity it motivates, is premised on shared cultures of resistance and broad visions for social change, and experiences of confrontation with the existing order — the antagonistic "other" against which solidarity in resistance is inevitably forged. Traditional models of revolutionary solidarity, however, have tended to focus on class composition (in the mainstream socialist movement) or on accepted ethnic or national parameters of collective identity (in revolutionary anti-colonialism or Black Power, example). These are clearly not at work with anarchists. A closer description is that what we are witnessing is a postmodern form of *tribal* solidarity, which is also prefigurative in its relation to an anarchist vision of a network of diffuse-membership communities.

Much has been written of the contribution of the Internet to the development of the anarchist and broader anti-capitalist movements and their resulting ability to define a newly global terrain of solidarity (Cleaver 1998, Klein 2000). This alone, however, would tend to portray any movement tribalism as entirely dislocated and virtual, which is not the case. However, the fabric of anarchist tribal solidarities proceeds more importantly from the face-to-face context of the local affinity-groups and activist milieus, the small "bands" and "extended families" where primary solidarity is generated on the most intimate level of personal trust and friendship. Larger-scale solidarities are enabled through the further intersection of these local milieus, that is, through the combined reproduction of networks of trust and affinity among activists from diverse anarchist and non-anarchist political backgrounds. The special dynamic attached to tribal solidarity is that beyond the level of personal ties, there is an instinctive tendency to extend it also to perceived members of one's extended family or tribe. Thus, the type of interaction that can be observed between activists from different countries who meet for the first time is very similar to that between newly-met distant relatives. The sense of familiarity, in these exchanges, is initially based on the mutual recognition of various indicators of an "activist" culture, be they the presence in a certain place (squat, community, demonstration) or even visual cues such as dress and political symbols. In a further conversational ritual, familiarity or tribal affinity is probed through a search for

mutual acquaintances, political discussion or relating stories of political action. Tribal solidarity exists as a potentiality that can be self-actualised in a self-selected manner, thus destabilising the boundaries of membership and non-membership. Amplified and actualised *as solidarity*, the postmodern tribalism of contemporary anarchists and their cousins would lead their choices around wielding power to maximise inclusivity, reflectivity and consideration.

Chapter 6: Beyond "Diversity of Tactics"

Re-assessing the Anarchist Debate on Violence

> It is better to be violent, if there is violence in our hearts, than to put on the cloak of non-violence to cover impotence. Violence is any day preferable to impotence. There is hope for a violent man to become non-violent. There is no such hope for the impotent.
>
> — M.K. Gandhi (attributed)

Questions of political violence have generated an often heated and divisive debate among contemporary anarchists. The purpose of this chapter is to explain why this debate is so difficult, and to disentangle it in some measure. The first section contextualises the discussion on violence in recent events, up to the present fatigue- induced compromise on "respect for a diversity of tactics". The second approaches the concept of violence, emphasising the inevitably normative nature of its definition. Following a critique of existing literature, a recipient-based definition of violence is suggested, whereby an act is judged violent according to its embodied perception as an attack or deliberate endangerment. The third section looks at justifying anarchist violence. Here I consider a) concerns on the inconsistency between violence and the anarchist ethos of prefigurative politics; b) difficulties with anarchist justificatory rhetoric on violence; and c) inherent limits to any enterprise of justification based on the obvious but correct rule, "avoid violence as far as possible". I close with comments on violent activity's capacity to both empower and disempower, on revenge, and on the necessary conditions for any anarchist reconsideration of armed struggle.

Contextualising the Present Debate

Anarchists in the nineteenth and early twentieth century situated their discussion around violence in one of two contexts: armed mass insurrection, or assassinations of heads of state, industrialists and so on. Today, in contrast, the primary context in which "anarchist violence" is mentioned is violent *protest*. The events which have most frequently provoked debate around anarchist violence are confrontations with police and/or property destruction, particularly during anti-capitalist protests and counter-summits mobilisations. This came to public attention in the global anti- capitalist movement's 1999 "coming-out parties" in London (June 18) and Seattle (November 30), and continued in Prague and Quebec City in 2000. The emblematic event portrayed by the media as "anarchist violence", however, is the street-fighting that took place in central Genoa during the weekend of anti-G8 protests in July 2001, in which the only death and all 200 or so trauma injuries were sustained by anarchists and other protesters (On Fire 2001, Wu Ming 2001).

One of the most notable elements in these events was the activity of black blocs. A black bloc is an ad-hoc tactical formation undertaken during protests or mass actions. Affinity groups and individuals cluster together, mostly wearing black trousers and hooded sweatshirts, often covering their faces both to maintain a symbolism of anonymity of the kind promoted by the EZLN (Marcos 1998) and to protect themselves against police surveillance. The tactic originates with the German anti-fascist scene (Katsiaficas 1997), which consists most numerously of anarchists, communists, squatters and others in the "autonomen" tradition. Black bloc tactics first appeared in the United States during the protests against the Gulf War in 1991, and have mobilised on and off at major protests since Seattle. Whereas in the U.S. black blocs have been small and deliberately avoided outright fighting with police (ACME 2000, Flugennock 2000), European black blocs have tended to be much larger and more confrontational, including barricades, stone-throwing and even petrol bombs. Also of note is the legacy of the military dictatorship in Greece — an especially confrontational protest environment, where street-fighting and property destruction are a regular feature of demonstrations (Anonymous7 2002).

Yet even the heaviest street-fighting does not involve anarchists taking up arms, as they would and did a hundred years ago. This explains the different contours of the debate, as well as its prominence among anarchists and their allies. The main difference between the contemporary and historical contexts lies in the levels of violence used, not by anarchists in particular, but by egalitarian movements in general. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, anarchism was a movement firmly rooted in the insurrectionary context of peasant and working-class opposition to the prevailing social order, which also fuelled the revolutionary aspirations of Marx, Lenin and Luxembourg. The bulk of "revolutionary" socialists before the World War II had violent revolution in mind. Tolstoy's libertarian Christian pacifism was the first quasi-anarchist doctrine of non-violence (Tolstoy 1910), but it was hardly influential among the anarchists of the time. By the time Gandhi (on whom Tolstoy had some influence) and Martin Luther King were popularising the notion of "non-violent action" in public discourse, the anarchist movement had yet to reconstitute itself on a meaningful scale. At the same time, the movements at whose intersection contemporary anarchism reappeared were sometimes squarely rooted in the tradition of civil-rights pacifism (e.g. the women's anti-nuclear movement) or focused on self- endangering eco-defence tactics without too much attention to questions of violence.

Due to the prevalent culture of non-violent radicalism inside which anarchism was reconstituted, a tension was inevitable. On the one hand there was anarchists' obviously violent past and the minority of young activists who were up for urban confrontation, and on the other hand was the taboo on political violence, unquestioned by most non-anarchist in the "anti-globalisation movement", as well as by many people who were finding their way to anarchism around the turn of the millennium. At the same time, the mass media sensationalised anarchist violence, playing on the now-trenchant public opinion that peaceful protest is the only legitimate form of political contestation. Many anti-globalisation figureheads chimed in, complaining that the anarchists were "distorting the message of the protests".

As many who have followed recent debates over violence in the movement can indicate, many anarchists' earlier responses to denunciations of the protest behaviour of some anarchists were to minimise the role of "violence" in the events. In Seattle, the marches and sit-down obstructions of WTO delegates were undertaken under strict non-violence guidelines. However, on the first night of the blockades, groups self- described as anarchists and anti-authoritarians trashed the

store-fronts of a Niketown, a McDonald's outlet and so on, though avoiding confrontation with police. After the protests, an affinity group wrote:

> We contend that property destruction is not a violent activity unless it destroys lives or causes pain in the process. By this definition, private property — especially corporate private property — is itself infinitely more violent than any action taken against it…In a society based on private property rights, those who are able to accrue more of what others need or want have greater power. By extension, they wield greater control over what others perceive as needs and desires, usually in the interest of increasing profit to themselves…When we smash a window, we aim to destroy the thin veneer of legitimacy that surrounds private property rights…After N30, many people will never see a shop window or a hammer the same way again. The potential uses of an entire cityscape have increased a thousand-fold…Broken windows can be boarded up (with yet more waste of our forests) and eventually replaced, but the shattering of assumptions will hopefully persist for some time to come. (ACME collective 2000)

Property destruction, then, is presented as a form of "propaganda by deed" (see ch.3). But the terms in which this rationale is constructed should be made plain: the act of property destruction is coded as inherently non-violent (though it is said it can have violent by-products), and the "violent" tag is transferred to what the object of destruction symbolises. The rhetorical purpose of ACME's typically anarchist piece of reasoning is to cast the weight of violent protagonism away from themselves and onto capitalism and the state. Here we encounter a prevalent feature of anarchist discourse, which is the coding of the state *as* violent. A statement from Malatesta (1921) is typical:

> Anarchists are opposed to every kind of violence; everyone knows that. The main plank of Anarchism is the removal of violence from human relations. It is life based on the freedom of the individual, without the intervention of the *gendarme*. For this reason we are enemies of capitalism which depends on the protection of the *gendarme* to oblige workers to allow themselves to be exploited — or even to remain idle and go hungry when it is not in the interest of the bosses to exploit them. We are therefore enemies of the State which is the coercive, violent organization of society.

The status of the state as violence is tangential to the discussion of anarchist violence. Still, it should be commented that in order to make this argument, Malatesta has to rely on a very simplistic view of the state as the enforcing arm of capitalism; the state-capitalist system "is" violent because it relies on violence to secure compliance. But people often comply without the intervention of the *gendarme* — out of habit, trust, short term interests or other reasons. Hence, the social structure "relies" on the *gendarme* only in the last instance, that is, in the face of manifest resistance. Malatesta's own argument thus suggests that the violence of the capitalist-serving state is necessarily reactive — the state is only "violent" to the extent that disobedience draws a violent response; the accusation of violent protagonism thus rebounds on the rebel.

With both the ACME collective and Malatesta, "we are being given definitions issuing from political intention and required for simple *tu quoque* argument, whatever it may be worth" (Honderich 1989:150) The *tu quoque* (L. "you too" or "look who's talking") is directed towards any

statist critic of anarchist violence, including one on the "left". Citing state or capitalist violence is intended to draw the critic's attention to her or his own belief that the state is legitimate, which necessarily involves approval for at least some of its violent acts. The construction of the state as violence diverts the discussion from violence to the legitimacy of the state. It may be an efficient way to silence critics, but it evades rather than confronts the issue of anarchist violence.

Returning to the present-day context, it should be pointed out that frictions around violent protest were the last straw in the split between "horizontals" and "verticals" in the frail anti-globalisation coalitions that had proliferated since Seattle. Many grassroots and direct-action groups, most of them not self-identified as anarchists, were already sitting uneasily with the NGOs, unions and political parties because of their reformist aims, vertical organisation and politicking. When anti- globalisation figureheads and communist spokespeople automatically denounced the "violent activists" after every protest, a breach of solidarity was perceived in many grassroots and direct action groups. After Genoa in particular, many activists saw these denunciations as contributing to the "good protester / bad" protester" game played by the G8 leaders and corporate media. Many activists who would not condone violence perceived this as an expression of gross insensitivity and lack of solidarity with hundreds of traumatised and imprisoned activists. As a result, they almost invariably refused to denounce anarchist violence *because* the reformist and authoritarian actors had done so. This, in addition to the shared experience of repression in Genoa and elsewhere, reinforced cultural cohesiveness and collective identity in the direct action wing of anti-neoliberal campaigning, many of whose participants were now perceptibly less uncomfortable with being called "anarchists".

The result of this repositioning was that direct-action participants, more unified in practice but still divided on questions of violence, gravitated towards a certain *modus vivendi.* This is encapsulated under the frequently used phrase "respect for a diversity of tactics". This involved replacing the relatively strict non-violence guidelines that had become the accepted framework of large-scale mobilisations with a framework in which different forms of political expression and different levels of confrontation are accepted, and coordination takes place in order to allow them to take place not to interfere with each other (a model that had already been used with substantial success to disrupt the Prague IMF/World-Bank meeting in September 2000). This analysis points to the fact that in social movements, effective consensus around an issue — and thus, a point of ideological equilibrium — is often shaped by events, emotions and solidarities as much as it is by discussion. But while "diversity of tactics" may serve as a useful resting-point for strategical purposes, it can only do so at the price of suspending the debate.

Starhawk's widely-read action reports also provide an good illustration of the progression from "non-violence" to "diversity of tactics" in the attitudes of contemporary anarchists. Writing after the International Monetary Fund/World Bank blockades in Prague (9.2000), she puts herself squarely on the principled non-violence side of the dichotomy with statements such as "this is a violent system [but] I don't believe it can be defeated by violence" and, "as soon as you pick up a rock…you've accepted the terms dictated by a system that is always telling us that force is the only solution." But after the Quebec City FTAA protests (4.2001) the picture is different. In the article "Beyond Violence and Nonviolence" she acknowledges the validity of arguments for "high confrontational" (though no longer "violent") struggle, and maintains that couching the debate in the terms she herself earlier used is constricting, at a time when "we're moving onto unmapped territory, creating a politics that has not yet been defined." By Genoa (7.2001), Starhawk is prepared to declare her sisterhood with the black bloc-ers, who represent "rage,

impatience, militant fervor without which we devitalize ourselves" (Satrhawk 2002:58, 96, 123). The attempt here is explicitly to transcend the use of the word "violence" — which is also invoked by the phrase "non-violence". It is intended, again, to silence what Starhawk sees as a politically-crippling debate, because of the "loaded" nature of the word violence.

The word violence was also effectively swept under the carpet by the third global conference of PGA in Cochabamba. In September 2001, the conference plenary agreed to strike the phrase "non-violent" from the network's fourth hallmark that originally calling for "non-violent direct action and civil disobedience", inserting the wording on "maximising respect for life" (see ch.1). According to one participant (El Viejo 2002),

> The problem with the old formulation was first that the word "Non-violence" has very different meanings in India (where it means respect for life) and in the West (where it means also respect for private property). This basic misunderstanding has proved quite impossible to correct in media — or indeed in the movement itself. The north American movement felt that the term could be understood to not allow for a diversity of tactics or even contribute to the criminalisation of part of the movement. The Latin American organisations had also objected to the term in their regional conference, saying that a "call to civil disobedience" was clear enough, whereas "non-violence" seemed to imply a rejection of huge parts of the history of resistance of these peoples…Actions which are perfectly legitimate in one context can be unnecessarily violent (contributing to brutalise social relations) in another. And vice versa. Precisely to make this clear, the zapatista army (EZLN) was invited to be among the first generation of convenors.

This conference had opened on September 16 2001, when it was still unclear what would happen after the attack on the Pentagon and World Trade Center. While for a time the tide of defensiveness and "patriotism" seemed to mean the end of all forms of social protest, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have led to renewed protest, this time against the backdrop of extremely violent actions by the state. In such a situation, complaints about violent protest were felt to be wearing thin in the public discourse, and activists no longer felt themselves obliged to defend their actions as non-violent. When asked about violence during George W. Bush's upcoming visit to Rome, Luca Cassarini, a leader of the non-anarchist *disobedienti* (formerly the "White Overalls") replied: "If a criminal of the calibre of Bush is given the red carpet treatment, then rage is the right reaction" (BBC News 28.5.2004), adding that "compared to a hundred thousand civilian deaths in Iraq, a few broken windows are hardly what will bother the Italian public". At the same time, forces on the mainstream left who would denounce anarchist violence were caught in an uncomfortable position: how could they do so while supporting Palestinian kids throwing stones and Molotovs at Israeli soldiers, or even parts of the Iraqi resistance, without being portrayed them as "Not In My Back Yard" pacifists? The only available response would be to argue that Palestinians and Iraqis were resisting an illegal occupation, and that the U.S. and Israeli armies are not the same as a domestic police force — which again brings the discussion back to the legitimacy of the state.

At this juncture, then, it would appear that the taboo over violent protest has been somewhat eroded, not so much by anarchists as by the frequency of warfare. With it, arguments like that of the ACME collective which seek to preserve the "nonviolent credentials" of anarchist actions are losing their relevance.

Relevance aside, such arguments' credibility had by now already been challenged in strong terms. In an influential pamphlet from the period, Ashen Ruins (2002) argued that while "violence must never be romanticized or fetishized, and resorting to violence should not be a casual decision, tactically, strategically or personally", anarchists have fallen under the sway a *rhetoric of non-violence* which is is reactionary, "clouded by Statist assumptions and middle class fears". In their uncritical stance towards the ethos of non-violence, anarchists are cooperating with the quietism and respect for the social peace associated with the the statist left (both liberal and communist) — which "may as well be the [values] of the capitalist and the politician for all the difference it makes". Anarchists, however, should not be afraid to rock the boat:

> Instead of claiming that smashing a window isn't violent — a point that average people reject out of common sense (and therefore makes me wonder about the common sense of some anarchists) — why don't we drop the semantics and admit that, yes, it's very clearly violent and then make a case for it?…[If] smashing a window is merely a symbolic act, but not violent, what message are we trying to send? With smashing a window thus set as the absolute limit of appropriate dissent, aren't we really making the absurdly contradictory point that this violent system must be opposed through a variety of tactics, up to and including smashing a window (which is not violent, by the way). But no further. Is this the limit, then, of our resistance? What a sad comment on our motivations, if non-violence is the furthest frontier of our rage.

The essence of this response to the ACME collective is that in a revolutionary framework, a case *can* be made for actions which are, commonsensically, violent. The point here is that it is not enough to call something violent (however defined) in order to make it unjustified. The separation between the axes violent/nonviolent and justified/unjustified is crucial to the discussion of violence, since the two tend to be completely entangled in everyday speech.

Ashen Ruins' critique of the leftist discourse on violence, and anarchists' uncritical acceptance thereof, is part of a broader point connected to the trend of anarchist "insurrectionism". This trend recalls Bakunin and Malatesta in its emphasis on an ever- present potential for revolutionary uprising (cf. Bonanno 1998, Anonymous8 2001). The typical argument is that there is a broad-based undercurrent of often violent (and non-violent) revolt in advanced capitalist societies, present in the prison population, in sporadic violence against police in poor communities, in vandalism, "anti-social behaviour" and other types of activity rationalised as criminality, etc.. The unstated presumptions of this revolt are seen as anti-authoritarian and resistant to institutionalised organisation, and Ashen Ruins calls anarchists to respond to it with active solidarity. The emblematic "left", in this optic, is both afraid of and unable to understand this undercurrent. This is because of its attachment to a discourse of violence / non-violence that a) rejects any use of offensive force against the state and b) codes "violence" in terms of a cultural taboo, strongly connected to fear of the uncontrollable, the abnormal and the criminal. There is a point to this critique, but it is only a starting point for a more constructive effort to supply useful insights concerning anarchist violence.

Messy Definitions

Violence is a concept with which it famously difficult to come to terms. As Eduardo Colombo points out, the problem arises from the "expanse of [the word's] semantic field. Violence is not a unified conceptual category. The most general content of the word refers to an excessive, uncontrolled, brutal, abusive force. The violence of rain, wind, fire. If one wants to coerce someone by force, one does him violence. But one can coerce by other means — threat, *bons sentiments*, deceit. A body or a conscience is violated. But one also does oneself violence to overcome one's anger. One has a violent and devouring passion for a woman or for liberty. Violent are despotism and tyranny". (Colombo 2000)

What is left unnoticed here is that in all its uses, violence (at least between human beings) is universally a disvalue. It is trivial that, other things being equal, less violence is better than more. Even where it is widely thought to be justified (e.g. violent self-defence against a life-threatening attack), violence is intuitively seen as something bad, albeit that it is intended to prevent something worse. However, the controversy over the definition of violence is precisely about how that normative "negativity" is *allocated* to the concept. What is it about violence that is by definition bad, even if justifiable?

Zygmunt Bauman interprets the construction of the concept of violence in connection to the uncontrollable, the abnormal, and the criminal, as a feature of the hegemonic social discourse of modernity. This connection focuses attention to particular areas of the semantic field, while overshadowing similar behaviours when they are normalised and legitimised. On hearing the word "violence" many people would first entertain things like terrorism, murder and rioting, and only later (if at all) things like cluster-bombing or execution. People will often say that a police officer is "violent" if she uses "excessive force", but not so if she uses force as the law expects her to (which can easily include twisting an arm or using her baton). Zygmunt Bauman traces this paradox to a particularly modern ambivalence about might, force and coercion. In the prevailing discourse of modernity, as Bauman sees it, the humanising pretences of the enlightenment are at work in portraying modernity itself as a process that removes violence and brutality from social relations. But this belief needs to be rationalised against the fact that violence has not been abolished but only redistributed. Torture, public beheading and indiscriminate violence by legal armed forces may have been "abolished" in modern Western societies, but they continue to be employed by many of these societies as imperialist powers. Within these societies, they have been replaced by no less cruel forms of violence (lethal injection, prison brutality, chemical weapons for crowd dispersal), some more sanitised than others. To maintain the belief that violence in social relations is receding, the word "violence" itself comes to be coded on one side of dichotomies such as legal-illegal, legitimate- illegitimate, normal-irregular. The former is also attached with a positive indicator — e.g. punishment or the enforcement of law and order — while the other is censured *as* violence, expressing shock, reaction to the unexpected and the fear of the uncontrolled (Bauman 1991:143–6, Goodman 1996:160).

A similar critique is attached to R. P. Wolff's philosophical attack on the possibility of any adequate concept of political violence. Wolff argues (1969:613) that the concept of violence "serves as a rhetorical device for proscribing those political uses of force which one considers inimical to one's central interests". The contemporary dispute over violence and non-violence in 1960s American politics is said to be irredeemably mired in "ideological rhetoric" designed to either halt, slow or hasten change in the existing distribution of power and privilege — depending on

the class position of the observer. Established financial and political interests identify violence squarely as illegal and condemns all challenges to the authority of the state and property rights. Middle-class liberals encourage some illegal dissent and disruption (rent strikes, sit-ins), but only so long as it does not challenge the economic social arrangements on which their success is based. For reactionary white working- class constituencies, "violence" is any threat from the outclass — street crime, ghetto riots and civil rights marches. For the Black outclass and its sympathisers within the liberal wing, the application of "violence" is typically reversed to the police not rioters, employers not strikers etc. — "the outclass naturally seeks to legitimise the riots, harrassments, and street crime which are its only weapons. Equally naturally, the rest of society labels such means 'violent' and suppresses them" (615).

Wolff further argues that the concept of violence, in what he sees as its "distinctive political sense", is nonsensical. Since "force" alone is clearly not violence (consider a doctor setting a dislocated shoulder), Wolff defines violence as "the illegitimate or unauthorized use of force to effect decisions against the will or desire of others" (Wolff 1969:606) — force proscribed by a source of legitimacy. In Wolff's narrow terms, the only relevant source for "political" legitimacy is the state authority.

Since as a philosophical anarchists Wolff thinks *de jure* political authority — the right to command and its corresponding duty to obey — cannot be in any case established (see ch.4), what is left is the concepts of *de-facto* authority and the actions which it proscribes being defined as "violence". But this proscription can never carry any *de jure* moral weight. Wolff thus concludes that it is impossible to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate uses of force, and that the concept of political violence is itself nonsensical. As a result, there is no valid *political* criterion for the justified use of force. "No coherent answers could ever be given [to familiar questions] such as: when is it permissible to resort to violence in politics; whether the black movement and the student movement should be nonviolent; and whether anything good in politics is ever accomplished by violence". (602)

Wolff's definition of violence is indeed nonsensical. On such a definition, no act of force by a legitimate authority (if such one could exist) can be considered violent. It would entail, not only that an execution, unlike murder, is simply not a violent act (Wolff's example), but that in a gunfight between guerrillas and military forces, both of whom are doing the exact same thing, only the former side of the interchange is violent while the latter is not. However, Wolff is not, as he claims, demolishing the concept of violence as such. He is only doing so with a tailor-made concept of violence in which its normative disvalue is allocated (only) to *force*, and specifically so because of its *political illegitimacy* (a non-concept to begin with). Such a critique may be valid, but it leaves one with no new starting point for discussion.

This is also the place to register the concern about physical force as the only action that can qualify as violent. It would mean, at odds with ordinary usage and belief, that illegitimate systematic emotional abuse is not violence. Scenes of sectarian intimidation outside a Catholic primary school in Belfast, involving threats, spitting and shoving, should not be considered political *violence*. A definition of violence which pays no attention to non-physical actions fails to address central senses of the term.

Ted Honderich (1989) explicitly declines to incorporate Wolff's arguments, and seeks a definition that is sufficient for discussing the moral dilemmas of political violence for the "left". An act of violence, he stipulates, is "a use of considerable or destroying force against people or things, a use of force that offends against a norm. This is not to presuppose, obviously, that in

one's final verdict an act of violence must be wrong". Honderich sees value in that the definition marks off the factual and evaluative parts of the concept. Now the factual statement is, as just demonstrated, arbitrary in its exclusion of non-physical acts. Whereas in terms of evaluation, this definition does not allocate the disvalue of violence to anything, only states that it exists — a norm is offended. The immediate question is, of course, Whose norm? But Honderich sidesteps this question, stating that "there would be, in other enterprises other than our own, a need to give attention to the notion of a norm". However, the forms of violence he wants to consider cover "such things as race riots, the destruction by fire and bomb of pubs and shops, kidnapping, hijacking, injuring, maiming and killing", as well as riots "despite their non-rational momentum". As a result, the deciding factor for defining "political violence" as a composite term (whether from the "left" or from the "right") is that it is directed against the government. So for all relevant purposes, he says, a "norm" is simply substitutable for criminal law. Thus *political* violence is a use of force as above, inasmuch as it is "prohibited by law and directed to a change in the policies, personnel, or system of government, and hence to changes in society" (Honderich 1989:151).

Honderich thus offers another tailor-made definition of political violence which is, at the end, identical to Wolff's. Consider the inclusion of *things* in the same breath with *persons*. This would mean, very counter-intuitively, that to destroy operational military weapons in the cause of disarmament is by definition and in every instance "political violence". This is because, in the grammar of Honderich's definition, the substitution of illegality for a norm (introduced to define an act as *political*) ends up also being what defines it as *violent* — as a necessary and sufficient condition (since the use of considerable or destroying force cannot be bad as such). But this is unjustified since Honderich, like Wolff, does not think that state authority enjoys any independent moral status. As a result, illegality cannot by itself be the deciding factor on whether something is *violent* — a prior norm inevitably needs to be stipulated.

Both authors do so, but only under their breath. Honderich later refers to the cost of violence as "distress" (195) — intuitively an unpleasant feeling or situation, perhaps temporary, and not necessarily physical. While Wolff states that beyond rejecting a nonsensical "distinctive political concept of violence",

> If violence is construed in the restricted sense as bodily interference or the direct infliction of physical harm, then the obvious but correct rule is to resort to violence when less *harmful or costly* means fail, providing always that the balance of good and evil produced is superior to that promised by any available alternative. (Wolff 1969:608, emphasis added)

The definition of violence depends on where one allocates the the term's negative normative charge, pointing to what makes it a disvalue. Intuitively, distress and harm are much better candidates for this allocation than illegality. What makes them attractive is that harm and distress are connected to violence as an *embodied experience*, in which persons' concepts of violence are ultimately rooted. Current theories in cognitive science often stress that consciousness, meaning and rationality are never entirely literal, but "tied to our bodily orientations and interactions in and with our environment. Our embodiment is essential to who we are, to what meaning is, and to our ability to draw rational inferences and to be creative" (Johnson, 1987:xxxviii). On such a theory bodily experiences generate more general mental representations or *image schemata in the* brain/mind, which are metaphorically projected to more abstract spheres of meaning and

understanding. A resultant conclusion is that the concepts which the human mind employs typically have their core in an embodied image schema, and a "conceptual periphery" that metaphorically extends out of this schema to contain a sometimes-broad array of meanings (Johnson 1993, Lakoff 1994, Lakoff and Johnson 1999). With such theories in mind, it makes sense to seek an understanding of violence that would recognise that the concept importantly traces back to formative bodily experiences — "harm" and "distress" obviously being bodily experiences of the recipient of violence.

Harm as the central criterion for defining violence is also at the centre of recent literature in criminology. Iadicola and Shupe (1998:15) criticise theories of violence which narrow the domain of studied violence to deviant behaviour that is incidental to the social order, while bracketing violence that is used to maintain that order (which is seen as legitimate and necessary). Such traditional approaches to the study of violence, which the authors call "order" approaches, also stress cultural relative definitions of violence, alongside an assumption that violence is inherent rather than learned. On the other hand, the "conflict" approach they suggest to violence is informed by an emphasis on conflict as central to the analysis of social relations. Conflict is seen as "endemic…[to] the class, gender, and ethnic divisions within the populations. The central questions for the conflict approach are: What are the conditions that provoke conflicts…[groups'] awareness or consciousness of their interests…[and] action that attempts to realize their interests" (16). For Pepinsky (1991:17), an approach to violence informed by this perspective would begin by recognising that the distinction between violence as crime or as punishment is politically partisan, and that "as a result is it morally and epistemologically unacceptable for non-partisan criminologists to accept any of these distinctions". Here, then, the distinction between violence and illegality is decisive — thus avoiding some problems of the previous accounts.

Iadicola and Shupe (23) cite a criminological definition informed by this perspective in which violence is "the threat, attempt, or use of physical force by one or more persons that results in physical or nonphysical harm to one or more other persons" (Weiner, Zahn and Sagi 1990:xiii). The problems with "threat" and "attempt", and the limitation to physical force, are again present here. Iadicola and Shupe, however, strike these points, and broaden the definition to "any action or structural arrangement that results in physical or nonphysical harm to one or more persons". Here, then, the disvalue of violence is allocated to *harm.* They further define a) personal violence as "violence that occurs between people acting *outside* the role of agent or representative of a social institution" and b) societal violence. This is divided into b1) institutional violence — "violence by individuals whose actions are governed by the roles that they are playing in an institutional context"; and b2) structural violence — harm caused "in the context of establishing, maintaining, extending or reducing the hierarchical ordering of categories of people in society". Structural violence can be exercised, then, both for and against hierarchy, as well as without an agenda either way — as acquired oppressive behaviour (e.g. violent sexism).

The authors note that, according to their definition, actions or structural arrangements that cause harm must be wilfully perpetuated, reproduced or condoned to be considered violent (so harmful accidents are excluded). However, violence occurs whether or not harm is the primary intention of an action or only its or forseeable by-product. Furthermore, the violence may be justified or unjustified; harm addresses both physical and psychological well-being; and harm may not be recognized as "violence" by the perpetrator and/or the receiver. The authors need this clause in order to avoid cultural relativism, which means including all cases of racist and sexist violence, however normalised they may be in a society.

While this definition of violence alleviates much of the concerns attached to the earlier, legitimacy-based definitions, several issues remain. First, it should be clarified that while the definition may avoid cultural relativism, it does not avoid relativism altogether. This is not necessarily a problem, but it should be acknowledged here that a more strict anti-relativist stance around violence — one that says that the fact that an act has caused harm can only be established subject to verification by a non-partisan participant — is not sustainable. At its base, the authors' reference to their definition as "universal *as opposed to* relative" is misplaced. It fails to distinguish between total and bounded relativisms, the latter being capable of granting *some* subjective truths an independent status, when the demand for external verification conflicts with another, more basic or important consideration.

The consideration in question is the elusive nature of psychological effects. Studies on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder point out that a person may sustain psychological harm, and be aware of it, without displaying any unambiguous symptoms thereof. With or without symptoms, connecting psychological harm to a particular antecedent act is not always straightforward — a victim may have suppressed details of a traumatic event in his or her own memory (Hembree and Foa 2000), sometimes as far as "erasing" the event altogether, thus retaining the harm without being able to trace it to a cause. For reasons such as these, psychological harm by its nature stands at an unfair disadvantage to physical injury in terms of its verifiability. With it, the observer needs to preform a more extended exercise in interpretation in order to substantiate that violence has occurred.

Moreover, the complaint of the alleged victim of violence is often what prompts the very act of interpretation and, no less often, is the only input on which the interpretation can be based. Imagine that A and B are divorcees who have just exchanged some harsh words. B says she has suffered psychological harm because on two occasions A used language that she perceived as abusive and threatening. However, the words were abusive only in the context of some very idiosyncratic, perhaps embarrassing sensibility, that only she and A are aware of (and which A was prodding on purpose). An external observer, to whom B's sensibilities are entirely alien, might fail to understand how the words could possibly be abusive. Here, Iadicola and Shupe's definitions would indicate that the only way to determine that A's action caused B psychological harm is to *believe B that she actually felt what she says she felt.* If the demand for universality is uncompromising, then as a subjective utterance B's complaint cannot enjoy any *prima facie* credence.

So much for bounded relativism. There is, however, another important anomaly, that calls into question the status of "harm" itself. Imagine A throws a punch at B, and misses. No harm has been done, but surely the act is violent. In case psychological harm might be stipulated, assume also that B has been in many fights before (maybe A missed because B dodged the blow). At any event, B can conceivably walk away from such the exchange without any psychological damage — but still the exchange can only have been violent. Consider also a scenes in recent footage from the anti-G8 blockades in Stirling, Scotland (6 July 2005).[www4.indymedia.org.uk — action begins at 4min:25sec.] A group of (presumably anarchist) protesters is moving down a road and approaching a line of riot police, officers in padded armour and 4-foot tall transparent plastic shields. The protesters intend to break through the line, and make for the nearby motorway. Shouts are heard, a few objects are thrown, miss, or hit the policemen's shields. Then a group of protesters uses a makeshift battering-ram made of large inflated tyres to push through the centre of the police line. Others are throwing more objects, using intimidating language, and cheering.

One person strikes an officer's shield with a golf club. If the footage is faithful to reality, and inasmuch as the policemen are trained for such situations or have been in them before, then it is hard to see where any harm is being done to persons in this particular exchange. Nevertheless, the protesters are very obviously being violent.

Recalling earlier terminology (see ch.4), *force* is clearly at work with the battering-ram (the policemen have no choice about being pushed back) — but not so with their retreat away from blows or thrown objects despite having shields. Could this aspect of the violence be *coercion*? This, it will be remembered, should involve a credible threat. Since the police can clearly repel the protesters in an instance if they only choose, it would seem that no credible threat is present. Where is the violence?

What is really happening here is the enactment of a set-piece violent exchange in which both sides know what variables are at work. The protesters and police have both considered, and probably drilled, this eventuality. Why did the police allow the protesters through? One could imagine that a commanding officer would give the order to stand down in such a situation, following contingency guidelines issued to him in advance. He is effectively responding, in a pre-prescribed way, to the cost- benefit calculus imposed by the protesters' actions. For example, he could have judged that it was impossible to contain the protesters at this place and time without mounting a counter-assault, which would be more costly (in terms of potential injury to officers or even the police's public image) than to call in a larger force that would try to confront the protesters elsewhere. Since in the footage one hears no command being issued, what is just as likely is that the policemen are acting of themselves, on the basis of the same cost-benefit calculations but only inasmuch as it is sublimated in their training. They are generating a spontaneous, self organised response to the protesters that can only end up letting the protesters through.

In both cases, the protesters have exerted from the police a behaviour that is against their interests. This is *power-over*, but not in itself violent. The protesters have effectively "convinced" the police that further confrontation, here at this point, was not worth it. Where this exchange is violent is in the currency of the convincing communication: masked faces, offensive force, verbal abuse. It is violence because although the policemen may be neither harmed nor afraid, they do feel (at least to some degree) *attacked* and/or *endangered.* This is, to be sure, a unique situation: there *would* easily be bodily harm involved if the police were not so padded and shielded. This is not the typical situation in which we form our embodied notions of violence. But it does isolate the basic source of these notions, because they come primarily from experiences of violence on the receiving side. A definition of violence that cuts to the common embodied experience behind the term is necessarily recipient-based. Such a concept of violence centrally involves a sense of manifest vulnerability, and the infringement (violation) of one's immediate physical space. The horrible thing about torture is the forced bodily and mental intimacy with the torturer.

Let me suggest, then, that *an act is violent if a person experiences it as an attack or as deliberate endangerment.* This definition encompasses all the forms of violence mentioned by Honderich as "political violence" (which are also the relevant ones for anarchist preoccupations), as well as violence in the personal-is-political sphere. The vast majority of empirical cases will also involve harm. Like Iadicola and Shupe's definition, the present one may be extended to an account of institutional and structural violence. As a definition of violence that builds on individuals' shared embodied experiences, it clearly includes emotional and psychological forms of violence, which we also experience bodily. Taken alone, it makes no political distinctions: it covers both the protester being clubbed and the policeman subjected to a volley of Molotovs; the prisoner led

to execution and the tyrant dying with a bullet in the chest. Unlike Wolff's definition, violence is not necessarily bound up with the application of physical force, only with the bringing-about of an embodied experience of violation — often deliberately, but sometimes without great sensitivity to what the recipient is experiencing. It can avoid cultural relativism since our intimate experiences of violence in everyday life are largely of a common pool. Differences certainly exist among individuals, social classes and cultures in terms of the average frequency and intensity of violence in one's life, but the raw experience of violation seems to be very broadly shared. Even a person who has had a relatively sheltered biography can draw the connection between their own experiences of violation and those of individuals who are subject to it more frequently and/or intensely. On this definition *prima facie* credence is given to the alleged victim, but that an attack on danger have occurred will still be usually verifiable against reasonable interpretations of bodily symptoms and/or known circumstances. This is still bounded relativism, but it is certainly better than basing one's definition of violence a matter of "superstition and myth" (Wolff 610). It seems preferable to have matters hinge on shared embodied experience than on successful brain-washing.

While the great majority of actions perceived as an attack or danger also cause harm, there are also types of harm that are not perceived and are thus not, in the strict sense, violence. What I have in mind is harm as a foreseeable by-product of an action, where the perpetrator and the victim are not known to one another. This would mean that it is not violent if a pharmaceutical company distributes drugs that it knows may be harmful but doesn't care, which cause children to die. This is harmful, and certainly unjust, but it is only rhetorical or swear-word violence, not the real thing. Structural injustice of this kind only becomes structural violence if, after the initial perpetration, it continues to be *enforced* against manifest resistance. Likewise, property destruction that is not witnessed, and causes nobody to feel attacked, is not violent *even if* it harms someone's livelihood.

This, however, does not mean that property destruction is never violent. The issue is not whether an act has significant harmful by-products (ACME's "destroys life or causes pain"), but whether it involves humans experiencing it as an attack or anticipating it as danger *while it is happening*. This is the violation that people experience in the *context* of public anarchist actions of property destruction. If the kid behind the counter at a Shell gas station feels attacked and in danger when anarchists begin smashing it up during a demonstration, then that act is indeed violent, even the anarchists reassure us (and the kid behind the counter) that nobody was even dreaming of hurting him. If a passer-by thinks that the anarchists are about attack him, it is also inevitably a violent situation. In neither case does it mean that the violence is unjustified or unacceptable, only that it is there. But if the action happens in the dead of night, or at a midday protest when the gas station is closed while the neighbours are out in the street giving water to the protesters and partaking of looted food (Anonymous5, 2003) — then it isn't violent.

So property destruction is *sometimes* violent. The frame of thinking needs to be broadened here to consider the violence of the situation, not of any particular instance of an arm lifting a crowbar. A situation as a whole can be violent whether violation is the goal or the by-product of any particular action that happens within it. For those who don't experience it as violent, it can become a liberating Situation (Situationist International 1959). But it is precisely the "circumstantial" questions of who, where and how, that would determine our *definition* of a situation as violent.

Limits to Justification

Let us return, now, to the paradigmatic cases of anarchist violence, past and present: from confrontations like the one reviewed above, and on to cases where harm is unquestionable, up to and including armed insurrection. Before considering the status of "justification", attention should be given to the prevalent criticism that violence is inherently inconsistent with anarchist' own values or principles.

April Carter reviews two typical versions of this argument. The first says that "anarchist values are inherently and necessarily incompatible with the use of violence, given anarchist respect for the sovereignty of the individual and belief in the unqualified rights of each individual. No anarchist society would sanction one execution, let alone mass executions or wars on other societies…if anarchists distrust political fictions that justify the denial of actual freedoms, they must distrust more a style of [instrumental, "Leninist"] thinking which justifies the most final denial of freedom — death" (Carter 1978:327–8). This one-dimensional attempt to stretch principles is not convincing. Even if anarchists really thought in terms of individual sovereignty and rights, they would hardly believe them to be "unqualified". No individual is thought to have e.g. the "right" to exploit or abuse another person, and doing so is not part of the anarchist notion of freedom (which is socialist and communitarian). Moreover, if this argument is right, then anarchists would also be supposed to rule out even purely defensive lethal violence against life-endangering assault. Not only anarchists would say that even the supreme right to life may have to be violated by killing an otherwise unstoppable homicidal aggressor. Attaching anarchism to necessary pacifism on such absolutist terms does not work.

The uncritical expectation of purism on behalf of anarchists also colours a second version of the argument. Anarchists' principles, it can be said, lead them to reject centralisation and parties, "shunning contamination with politics in all its conventional forms, refusing to endorse even progressive parties or to take part in elections, however crucial the possible outcome…when it comes to violence, however, many anarchists are prepared to use a little violence to prevent greater violence by the state, or even a lot of violence to try to achieve the anarchist vision of society. It would seem that the logic of this approach is that it is worse to cast a ballot than to fire a bullet…the utopianism of anarchism logically entails also the utopianism of pacifism, in the sense of rejecting all forms of organized violence" (Carter 333–4) . This is again a straw man. Anarchists *do* often cooperate with non-anarchist organisations, NGOs and even political parties such as the Greens on particular campaigns and mobilisations. In the recent US elections many anarchists even took the strategic decision to cast a ballot for John Kerry, in compromise of their principles, and not for any positive reason but only in order to avert what they saw as the much greater evil of a second Bush term. Anarchists, then, should not be expected to be purist to the point of ridicule — there remains a room for compromise, the debate being only around where to draw the line. Since they do not claim to be fully consistent in their rejection of state politics, the parallel expectation of pure non-violence also falls away.

The salient issue which these two arguments orbit, but do not touch, is the one of prefigurative politics — the degree to which violence does or does not "cohere" with a strategy that is an embryonic representation of an anarchist society. Unlike other revolutionary movements, anarchists explicitly distance themselves from the position that the end justifies the means, and consequently they cannot say that violence, on whatever level, would be justified only because it helps achieve a free society. Rather, they believe that means and ends should always be of the

same substance (see chapter 3). As a result, the argument tends to take the following, straightforward form: "Anarchists want a non-violent society. Anarchists also believe that the revolutionary movement should prefigure the desired society in its means and ways. Therefore, anarchists cannot use violence to achieve a non-violent society". This argument seems attractive, but it fails on several counts. Beginning with the first premise, it is simply untrue that anarchists desire a "non-violent society" plain and simple. If lack of violence were the only issue, then one might expect anarchists to equally desire a hypothetical totalitarian state, in which the threat of Draconian sanctions is so effective that all citizens obey the law and the state consequentially does not need to ever actually use violence. The point, of course, is that anarchists want a stateless, or more broadly a voluntarily, non-violent society. Given this, it should first be emphasised that the type of violence anarchists are *primarily* concerned with abolishing is violent enforcement or institutional violence — an area in which complaints about prefiguration are irrelevant since anarchists certainly do not promote or use these forms. As for non-institutional, sporadic and diffuse instances of violence: it is misleading to say that anarchists want a society from which they are simply absent, but one from which they are absent *voluntarily*. If anarchy were to be purely non-violent, it could only be so because all individuals choose to avoid violence. But precisely because of its voluntary nature, the non-violence that anarchists promote for their desired society can only exist within the terms of an all-sided bargain. As indicated by the discussion of open-endedness in chapter 3, the proposed goal is an elusive one and by no means fail-safe: violence would still exist, even in an world without states and armed groups, if someone chose to perpetrate it. Thus the realisation of anarchist non-violence, "prefiguratively" or otherwise, is clearly impossible when some parties reject the bargain and consistently resort to violence. The present political sphere in which the state is a dominant agent represents just such a situation. Because of the state's preparedness to resort to violence, the anarchist model of non-violence by mutual consent simply cannot be enacted. It could be argued, then, that at least when it comes to violence, the idea of prefigurative politics can only be enacted within present-day *anarchist* settings — that is, in the striving for social relations bereft of violence within the movement itself, incorporating peaceful conflict resolution, mediation or secession. Finally and conclusively, it can be retorted that anarchist violence against the state is precisely prefigurative of anarchist social relations. This is because anarchists would always expect people, even an "anarchist society", to defend it (violently so if necessary) from any attempt to reconstitute social hierarchy or impose it on others. Violence taken against the (re)production of a hierarchical social order is appropriate now as it will be in a stateless society. In sum, the perceived cognitive dissonance around violence and prefigurative politics is not ultimately genuine, but a confusion resting on unwarranted utopian and purist associations attached to anarchism.

So much for responding to claims that violence can *never* be justified by anarchists. But the onus is still on anarchists to argue that violence *can* ever be justified, and to specify what justification would entail. What needs to be clarified first is *who* is justifying *what to whom*. We may assume without difficulty that it is an *anarchist* who wants to justifying a *violent action* (as defined above). Assume also that the justification is happening before the event, otherwise it has no practical significance. With the question *to whom* there is more difficulty. If the recipient of the justification is another anarchist, then the discussion may become too dependent on their very specific views as anarchists, and thus self-referential, prone to uncritical thinking and potentially blind to the concerns of people outside the movement. On the other hand, if the recipient does not share any concerns with the anarchist, then the discussion itself is pointless — if one thinks

anarchist goals are by themselves unjustified, then no means to achieve those goals can be justified, violent or not. In order to keep the discussion within controllable parameters, then, let us take a middle road and assume that an anarchist is trying to justify a hypothetical or intended violent action to a ally outside the movement — a person who may identify with the general goals of the anarchist, but is not so identified that s/he will accept any justification.

Such a person would have serious problems with several common anarchist statements. The chief of these is the denial that a discussion about justification is to be had at all. Some anarchists, though not many, may refuse any kind of justificatory discourse, citing a second-hand Nietzschean "rejection of morality" (CrimethInc. 2000:11–23). Here, wild violence is valorised for its lack of mediation, unsublimated realisation of desire, connection to the individual's animality and so on — terms that have no significance unless one already accepts such anarchist agendas. While anarchists may have good reasons to think that moral discourse, as a totality, is oppressive and constructed to the benefit of dominant groups, this does not exclude discussions of violence that have an agreed criterion for moral justification: *the principle of causing as little violence as possible in pursuit of just ends.* To begin with, this principle is not necessarily one of obligatory morality — like solidarity, it may well be an expression of something that anarchists would independently *desire.* But even if it is a matter of moral "limitations", this specific principle is not comprehensive enough to invite in the entire baggage of morality ethics that these anarchists have a problem with. So while justification is ultimately the self-justification of the reflective individual, this does not mean that it cannot happen on terms that are not only the individual's own.

Moving on, then, to justification and its own inherent problems. First, recall that in order to alleviate concerns around the "prefigurative coherence" of violence, a qualitative distinction was made between violence for or against hierarchy. The point there was one of interpretation, but when it comes to justification the use of such distinctions is far more dubious. To clarify: when speaking of violence, anarchists tend to draw, *d'entree de jeu*, all manner of distinctions. These mark off the violence of individuals and the organised violence of groups; unprovoked and defensive violence; violence as an act and violence as the property of an institution; and (obviously) the violence of the state and revolutionary violence. The latter is said to be justifiable because it is qualitatively different to that of the state — in its type, the spirit in which it is used, its extent and targets. Carter reviews such distinctions between state violence and the archetypes of lethal anarchist violence — the assassination of an individual tyrants and insurrectionary armed struggle. Anarchist violence in both cases relies on limited technology, is a "heroic" form of violence involving direct risk to those who take part (unlike the judge or general), and can be limited in its extent and discriminate in its targets (unlike the indiscriminate killing of most warfare).

This, by itself, does not cut to the core of justification. Here, some violence is "justified" by way of its qualitative segregation away from forms that anarchists reject, without specifying why the distinction is important. That people are outnumbered and under-armed doesn't automatically justify their actions, even if their ends are just. Such distinctions are, at their base, simplistic "just war" rhetoric intended to draw the discussion in directions that are convenient for anarchists.

Consider a very common excuse for anarchist violence, self-defence. The self- defence argument is an attractive starting point because it begins from a form of violence that is almost universally legitimated. Today, many anarchists legitimise throwing stones, bottles and Molotovs at riot police as an act of self-defensive violence, defence not only of their own bodies but of a

liberated urban space (whether a temporary one during a protest, or a more permanent one like a squat facing eviction). This justification, however, may be taken in some very difficult directions:

> The slave is always in a state of legitimate defence and consequently, his violence against the boss, against the oppressor, is always morally justifiable. [It] must be controlled only by such considerations as that the best and most economical use is being made of human effort and human sufferings. (Malatesta 1920)

Without the second clause, the first would clearly be unacceptable. This stretching of the concept of self-defence to justify any and every "pre-emptive strike" smacks of dishonesty. It depends on portraying capitalism as slavery, debasing the latter by erasing the distinction between swear-word slavery and the real thing, which is still happening in the world (ASI 2004). The exploitation of the worker, who has no choice but to sell her or his labour power under structurally unjust conditions, is qualitatively different from that of the slave, who is extended *no* rights and who may face direct bodily violence if s/he does not work or tries to escape. Without the second clause, it is also a very dangerous statement: such thinking involves tagging any agent of capital or the state as a slave-holder, a convenient way to dehumanise "class enemies" for the sole purpose of making the violation of persons more palatable.

The valuable point, however, is the second clause. Surely violence against the oppressor is *not* morally justifiable "always", but *only* if there is an effort to minimize human effort and suffering (or, as some would have it, to "maximise respect for life"). To justify a specific violent act, then, we would inevitably need to think about its overall consequences. Here, it is possible to return to Wolff (1969:608). Recall that he proposes that "moral philosophy in general" can deal with justified and unjustified violence; "the obvious but correct rule is to resort to violence when less harmful or costly means fail, providing always that the balance of good and evil produced is superior to that promised by any available alternative". With the appropriate modifications to how violence is defined, this rule seems commonsensical. It seems uncontroversial that it is better to try and liberate oneself, if possible, by non-violent methods rather than exalting violence as the default form of revolutionary action.

Still, this leaves open two grave difficulties.

The first is how exactly "resorting to violence" is framed. This term may, on one reading, be seen to in fact cover almost all available courses of political action including, most importantly, legal ones. This is because any appeal to, or pressure on, the state to back ones goals is, implicitly or explicitly, an attempt to solicit its violent capabilities to one's side. To take a historical example: while the American civil rights movement is often credited with the use of non-violent means, the abolition of legalised segregation in the United States was in fact accomplished through a series of what were clearly violent state interventions, most notably sending in the National Guard to oversee the desegregation of schools in southern states (Meyers 2000). Likewise, in wilderness protection, legal action is clearly a violent means: receiving a court injunction against a logging company means that the latter is to withdraw from timber harvesting, otherwise it will be forced to do so, or punished for not doing so, ultimately involving the armed might of the government. State intervention in such cases may not actually amount to bodily interference or the direct infliction of physical harm, but these acts of violence are always in place as a threat, and can in principle be enacted if the threatened party does not comply earlier. In choosing legal means we do not determine that violence will not be introduced into the situation, we only entrust

the decision on whether this will happen to the state. Such considerations seem to put a very stringent limitation on what can be considered non-violent action, restricting it only to the most passive forms of intervention.

The second difficulty comes from the fact that a framework of justification necessarily depends on the success of violent actions. Violence might be justified if it achieves some purpose, but it is certainly not justified if it fails. According to Wolff, we are to resort to violence only provided that the balance of good and evil that comes about as a result is superior to that created by any other course of action. This sounds pretty straightforward, but the kind of calculations it calls for are extremely difficult to carry out. Success is very hard to judge, and certainly to predict. To begin with, it is impossible to foresee with any certainty the results of a violent action (or any other action for that matter), since the factors that come into play are too numerous and contingent. A violent action may or may not involve injury to persons other than the intended target; it may or may not give rise to increased state repression; and it may or may not achieve the desired results. Since there is scant historical evidence to put the case one way or the other, it is doubtful whether any stable criteria can be established for judging whether a certain course of action is more harmful or costly than another. Discussing five possible scenarios of political violence motivated by an egalitarian agenda, with different degrees of success and different upshots of state repression, Honderich (1989:196–7) concludes that the probabilities for a lower balance of distress after the event "will be close to their critical level…for the most part we cannot judge the relevant probabilities with the precision needed for rational confidence. Certainly judgement between alternatives is necessary, and almost certainly there is a right judgement. That it can be made with rational confidence is unlikely".

This is, I am afraid, as far as the discussions of violence and justification can reach. No fully secure answer can be given to prevalent anarchist dilemmas around violence, such as whether it "sends a radical message" or "just alienates the public". The final and insecure judgement-call on whether to engage violence can only remain, at the end of the day, in the province of the individual. However, the framework offered here does disentangle the debate, and offers some clear markers for such decisions. All that can be prescribed beyond this is clear-headed consideration, avoidance of easy rhetoric that only serves for self-assurance, and a "diversity of tactics" under which the debate over violence is not silenced, but undertaken in a constructive and manner that takes full account of the gravity of violating human beings.

Empowerment, Revenge and Armed Struggle

In conclusion, let me look at three more important issues around violence which follow on from the previous discussion.

The first is that prefigurative politics may be seen to introduce a further requirement for justifying anarchist violence beyond the striving, however imperfect, to minimise it. The strong individualist aspect of prefigurative politics would also lead to the demand that the use of violence should be a worthwhile experience in its own right. We can ask, specifically, whether the experience of violence is by itself liberating, empowering and radicalising for those involved.

This again regards the emotional and affective aspects of violent protagonism. In some cases, as with the liberatory claims attached above to wild violence, there would seem to be little leeway for discussion — the experience of irrational, unmediated ferocity can hardly be engineered

or summoned up at will. For more pedestrian situations of collective violence, however, several markers can be drawn. In his comparison of two anti-capitalist riots in 2003, Tadzio Mueller (2004) focuses on the context-dependent circumstances in which violence emerges, distinguishing between the affirmative "collective effervescence" of a spontaneous but tactically-effective violent moment, and the stale reproduction of entrenched "us-and-them" dichotomies where tactics are subsumed in a disempowering, set-piece confrontation for its own sake. During the Thessaloniki EU summit,

> it was not merely as the result of rote repetition that the militants in Greece kicked off, it was a "rational" response to the structure of the field of militant activism, embodied in a militant habitus which generated a massively violent, but thoroughly expected riot…the riot ended up being fully "normalised", it was "hegemonic" in some sense…in spite of all the nihilist graffiti and radical posturing on the squatted campus, all that happened was a mere (re-)enactment and reproduction of traditions, habiti, rituals, and power structures — from this perspective, the riots were more conservative than radical (8).

This connects to one point that has been evaded so far in the wide debate on black blocs (Bray 2000, Black 2001, On Fire 2001, Anonymous3/4 2003, Gee 2003). Anarchists continuously emphasise that "the black block is not an organisation but a tactic", as an attempted remedy media misconceptions. However, it is still observable (at least in Europe) that there *are* many individuals for whom undertaking high-confrontational tactics while dressed in black *is* the repeated, and often exclusive, form of political expression during international protest events. There is, in other words, a "black bloc" political identity — an organising space within the anarchist movement that has a particular "flavour" or identification. It has several other distinctive features, such as cultural attributes associated with the punk/squat scene, and a disproportionate representation of certain nationalities. A relevant "black bloc" question is whether these identities do not become exclusive and/or constricting for the participants.

In addition, there are serious feminist issues with events such as this. They can be easily interpreted as strengthening "particular 'hegemonic masculinities', i.e. that valorise physical strength, machismo (in relation to other men as well as to women), and emotional passivity…[and] perhaps also generates its own momentum and problematic — one which is akin to that also represented by the machismo of a male dominated, body-armoured riot police. Given reports of sexual harassment made by women at the anarchist encampment at Thessaloniki…it indeed is tempting to see an emerging dynamic in militant factions whereby 'worthy' political violence is transmuted and normalised 'back' into the banal and disempowering violence of everyday sexism" (Sullivan 2004:29–30).

On the other hand, Mueller examines the unexpectedly radicalising and empowering features of a confrontation around the Evian G8 summit a few weeks earlier. The blockade, near the French town of Annemasse where many of the activists had been camping, was not supposed to be symbolic and non-confrontational. It was, in fact, set to take place on the main route into Evian — which the police had already decided, in anticipation of protests, not to use for transporting any delegates or support staff (they were instead driven to Lausanne to take a ferry across the lake to the summit). The event was organised, under strict non-violence guidelines, by the ATTAC coalition — which despite its militant-sounding name is in fact a very reformist and bureaucratically organised group, which lobbies for taxation of financial transactions and other marginal

limitations to neoliberalism. However, as the march approached the point of blockade, it received an unprovoked tear-gas attack. Then,

> after initially retreating about 50–100 metres and recovering from the initial shock, a number of masked activists, not affiliated with ATTAC, began building a barricade, while others threw stones at the police. Soon, one of the activists who had expressed her anxieties during the march passed me varying an armful of wood for the barricade — which had by now been set alight — exhorting me to join the effort: almost the whole march participated (3–4).

In this situation, activists without an experience in confrontation were able to draw on a new and alien action repertoire. As a result, they reported experiencing a qualitative break whereby certain things which were not "possible" prior to the riot had now become possible. Such effervescent riots, for Mueller, are empowering because they can produce sudden and ruptural changes in the established habitus, which lasts beyond the mere event and has effects beyond the circle of immediate participants through its narrative diffusion in movement networks. This is in line with a view that sees spontaneous violence "as a necessary and positive part of revolutionary liberation, not just in defining newly-won freedom, but in creating it…From this perspective violence is part of a total process and the value placed on violence stems mainly from the value placed on the popular self-expression and self- organization characteristic of revolutionary outbursts" (Carter 1978:338–9).

So violence may indeed be intrinsically valuable, through the radicalising effect of participation in its effervescent moments. I would go further to suggest that it is precisely the search for this kind of effervescence — especially the desire to recapture the founding ruptural moments of early mobilisations such as Seattle — that has played a significant part in motivating continued summit protests. However, as is evident from the example, the potential for rupture exists precisely in inverse proportion to how anticipated it is. This makes its planned repetition impossible — which is evinced by the continuing decline in anarchists' interest in predictable confrontation. This is not to say, however, that moments of rupture cannot still come around — as one did in Stirling, or when schoolchildren led disruptive and confrontational protests against the war in Iraq (BBC 2003).

A second, special point regards a motivation for anarchist violence considered more rarely, that of revenge. What kind of status can that concept have in a justificatory framework on violence? It is undeniable that many of the assassinations perpetrated by anarchists in the past were motivated by revenge. It could also be argued that revenge was, in fact, the only *possible* motivation for such political assassinations since it was always highly unlikely that these actions could achieve any lasting social change. The murder of leading politicians, businessmen or armed personnel does not attack the structure of the system in which they are embedded — it only removes a person from a role, not the role itself. The only exception to this is killing a true autocrat on whose person the edifice of government actually depends — someone like Hitler. But this is a very rare situation, and not one faced by the assassins of French president Carnot, U.S. president McKinley or king Umberto I of Italy.

The latter was shot by the anarchist Getaeno Bresci in 1900. Bresci was an Italian immigrant to the U.S., and the assassination was explicitly framed as an act of revenge: In 1898 in Milan, during protests over high bread prices, soldiers opened fire and killed hundreds of unarmed protesters

who ignored the order to disperse. King Umberto later decorated the general who gave the order to shoot, complimenting his "brave defence of the royal house". For this symbolic act Bresci resolved to kill the king, crossed the Atlantic, and shot him. Emma Goldman dedicated several articles to defending Bresci's action. Her choice of words says a lot about the problematic status of revenge for anarchists (Goldman 1917b):

> High strung, like a violin string, [souls] weep and moan for life, so relentless, so cruel, so terribly inhuman. In a desperate moment the string breaks. Untuned ears hear nothing but discord. But those who feel the agonized cry understand its harmony; they hear in it the fulfilment of the most compelling moment of human nature.

Goldman's decision to portray the assassin's actions as the result of psychological strain derive from the difficulty of legitimising an act of violence motivated by revenge alone. But this inevitably victimises of the perpetrator of violence, seeing his act as a pitiable response to the violence of the system, without figuring in the assassin's own agency. As such, it provides an excuse that is not necessarily called for — Bresci may be been entirely cool-headed in his actions.

On this score, and in a contemporary context, I would suggest that what is disturbing here is not revenge itself, but the fact that it is lethal. Take the following example of an action frequently taken against corporate and government figures:

> Date: Tue, 27 Jan 2004 12:36:26 -0800 From: Biotic Baking Brigade bbb-at-bioticbakingbrigade.org. Archived: biotech.indymedia.org Subject: Biotech Baking Brigade Pies Bayer Biotechnician
>
> On 21st January Paul Rylott — top GM scientist at Bayer Cropscience delivered a stirring speech on how to manage consumer response to biotechnology, at a conference on Managing and Predicting Crisis in the Food Industry. As he took his place in the queue for his buffet dinner a polite call of "Mr Rylott?" brought him face to face with a chocolate fudge cake (skipped and stale) covered with the sweaty rotting whipped cream and the shout "That's for GM!" before the assaulting party fled.
>
> Some leaflets were given out to the surprised and immobilized crowd and all those protesting left before the cops arrived.
>
> This is part of a national UK campaign against Bayer and against GM commercialization. Actions taken place have included junk mailing, sabotage including lock glueing, spraypainting, window breaking, golf courses destroyed, office occupations, noise demonstrations and trespasses.

On the definitions proposed above, pieing is certainly violent — Rylott no doubt experienced it as an attack, and perhaps would have already been afraid of something like this on the basis of previous harassment. It is also clear that the anarchists are motivated in part by revenge ("That's for GM!") and that they derive undeniable satisfaction form exacting it. Since the action itself is not, though violent, in any way *more* problematic than breaking through a police line, we can only conclude that anarchists can condone revenge as a motivation for violent actions — although the violence by no means needs to be lethal in order to satisfy this motivation. However, pieing also has another agenda, since it is only the simulation of political assassination. The victim lives to

know that the pie *could* just as well have been a knife or a bullet. Thus, besides aiming to ridicule and humiliate the victim, the attack also plainly has the intention of intimidation. Simulated assassination as micro-terrorism, if you will.

This leads, finally, to some exploratory remarks on an issue that anarchists will need to consider sooner rather than later — lethal violence in the context of armed insurrection. Such a discussion is clearly impossible without imagining some broader revolutionary scenario, which is inevitably speculative. Still, some things can be said with relative confidence, at least regarding the North. Here, one should begin by noting that the state's utterly disproportional military might, and powers of surveillance and social control, mean that it simply cannot be defeated in outright battle. Anarchists will probably never get their hands on what it takes to fight against tanks, mines, aeroplanes and so on. This means that, under any foreseeable circumstances, a precondition for any revolutionary social transformation is that most members of the police and army forces *desert* or *defect*. This, further, would seem to only be plausible in the context of an already-existing popular mobilisation that is very broad-based and very militant, and which is capable of winning over even serving members of the state's armed wing. So the first conclusion is that while mass insurrection may still be successful under some conditions, it also requires very sustainable foundations in the population, which are presently lacking.

On these considerations, armed struggle seems to be for now a self-defeating prospect. However, what anarchists may consider in this speculative context is the possibility of creating the appropriate conditions for its success. The current swelling of anarchist ranks means that, while there will certainly continue to be a presence on the streets, more energy is also becoming available for pro-active exploits beyond maintaining the public presence of dissent and raising the social costs of state and corporate excesses. The strategic outlook already prevalent among anarchists is that the road to revolution involves the proliferation of urban and rural projects of sustainable living, community-building and the development of skills and infrastructures. But while this is usually couched in terms of "hollowing out" capitalism, it can also be considered as the creation of a sustainable social base for more militant activity, up to (possibly) insurrection. In such a situation, armed struggle would be undertaken, not by isolated groups of desperadoes, but by communities which have already carved out a significant space of autonomy within hierarchical society. This could happen either in defence from a final, violent attempt of the state to recuperate those liberated spaces; as part of a large-scale scenario of social collapse threatened by climate change; or even pro-actively if the time is judged to be right. To be sure, none of this may ever happen at all — but the point is that this is the *only* realistic scenario under which successful armed struggle is plausible. So while armed struggle may not be an option in present times, it may well be profoundly entangled with the most non-violent and "constructive" anarchist exploits. When it comes to violence, then, it would seem that in the final analysis anarchists can do nothing but be responsible, experiment and keep their options open.

Chapter 7: Luddites and Hackers

Defining a Broad-Based Anarchist Politics of Technology

> Many of these kingless people rode horses and some wielded iron implements, but this did not make [the Hyksos] any more civilised than the copper-using ancestors of the Ojibwa on the Great Lakes; the horses and iron became productive forces, they became Civilization's technology, only after they became part of Leviathan's armory.
>
> — Fredy Perlman, *Against His-story, Against Leviathan!* (Detroit, 1983)

This chapter investigates anarchist approaches to technology. Whereas the movement's concrete activities around technology develop as a collective trial and error process, on the basis of diffuse campaigning and direct action which coalesce into a sometimes contradictory picture, my purpose here is to take a step back from this organic process, and ask two broad questions. First, can a critique of technology be articulated that is coherent and theoretically sustainable, while engaging with a broad selection of anarchists' ideas and concerns around the topic, as explicated in their writings and oral debates and as implied in their submerged discourses and actions? Second, what orientations in terms of political action does such a critique point to, once we take into account the broader strategic perspectives that many anarchists already endorse?

I begin with an overview of the ambivalence displayed by anarchist activities around technology today. I then address the first question, drawing on contemporary non-anarchist theories which have already supplied the basic building-blocks for a critique of technology to which anarchists should be largely sympathetic. The inherence of social relations in technology is today a fairly uncontroversial matter in scholarly discussion, while a significant number of writers are also mindful of the hierarchical and capitalist nature of these social relations. There is a widespread understanding that technology is to be approached as a "socio-technological complex", interlocking systems of human-machine interfaces that fix human behaviour, sustaining economic and power inequalities and generating new ones. However, where mainstream critics ultimately fail from an anarchist perspective is in their respective agendas of technological democratisation, and their ultimate reconciliation to technological modernity as a process that can be managed and controlled, but not contested in any fundamental respect. As a modifier to these shortcomings, I invoke the anarchist theory proposed by Catalan activist-hacker Xabier Barandiaran, and examine the applicability of the resultant formulation to the emerging field of nanotechnology. Finally, the discussion is oriented towards the actualisation of the critique in three different areas. First, I argue that many technologies which have an inherently centralising and profit-driven nature can only elicit an attitude of abolitionist resistance from anarchists — a new form of Luddism. I then discuss anarchists' attraction to the Internet as a decentralising and locally- empowering technological platform, but argue for a disillusioned approach that is mindful of the opposite qualities of the computer and communications infrastructure enabling

it. Finally, I look to areas in which anarchists would be drawn to adopt and develop alternative approaches to modifying the natural world, emphasising Permaculture and lo-tech innovation as parts of the "constructive" facet of an anarchist politics of technology.

As a final preliminary note, I should mention that I will be making only cursory reference to anarchist critiques of technology associated with what is often referred to as the "anarcho-primitivist" current of contemporary anarchism (Perlman 1983, Zerzan 1994, Moore 1997, Watson 1998; cf. Sahlins 1972, Jensen 2000). Going beyond literature into terms of anarchist political culture, I would venture to say that anarcho- primitivism is, at its base, a certain mentality that enjoys significant currency among anarchists, most noticeably among those parts of the English-speaking movement that focus on environmental direct action. With inevitable oversimplification, one might say that some of the most prominent attitudes involved with this mentality are:

(X) Very strong political, ecological and emotional concerns over industrialism, technology and hyper-modernity.

(Y) Love of the wild; eco-feminist consciousness; earth-based / non-western spirituality.

(L.vs.P) A "maximalist" anarchist critique of hierarchical civilisation, and of its His- story of domination and destruction from the beginnings of domestication, agriculture and the state.

(P.vs.L) A re-appreciation of hunter-gatherer and other communities as sites of primitive anarchy — egalitarian, peaceable, leisurely, ecstatic and connected to natural cycles.

Although the ideas expressed in this current are immensely interesting, specifically anarcho-primitivist critiques of technology are so thoroughly integrated with the other elements just mentioned that it takes a large measure of contextualisation to approach them as a separate thread. Moreover, since anarcho- primitivist orientations tend to generate much controversy within anarchist circles, it becomes very difficult to use them as a starting point for a more broad-based anarchist politics of technology. All the same, I think the conclusions this chapter is driving at, while addressing wider anarchist agendas, will at the same time sit well with anarcho- primitivism as far as technology is concerned.

Anarchists and Technology

On the surface, there is a certain ambivalence in the attitudes that contemporary anarchists display through their actions around technology. Many a British anarchist, for example, could pull up genetically modified crops before dawn, send emails to coordinate the next action in the morning, have a nap then do a bit of allotment gardening in the afternoon, and work part-time as a programmer in the evening. On the one hand, anarchists today are involved in a number of sustained campaigns in which the introduction of new technologies is explicitly resisted, from bio- and nano- technology to technologies of surveillance and military technologies. On the other hand, among social movements in the North anarchists have been making perhaps the most extensive and engaged use of information and communication technologies.

On the one hand, there has been active anarchist involvement in campaigning against the introduction of a biometric National Identification scheme in the UK, and French anarchist squatters have resisted the construction of a nano-science centre in Grenoble, their "grievance" being that technological convergence on the nano-scale will consolidate state and corporate power and increase all types of social inequalities. Looking back at two of anarchism's main "progenitor"

movements in the eighties, we can notice that the direct-action feminist movement was strongly involved in resistance to nuclear energy, then nuclear weapons, and that the direct-action environmental movement also had clear issues with technological advancement (in genetics, chemicals, transport…). Anarchist resistance to GM crops throughout the nineties is a hallmark of this anti-technological position. The first recorded trashing of a GM crop occurred in the U.S. in 1987 when *Earth First!* activists pulled up 2,000 genetically modified strawberry plants (SchNEWS 2004:171). The first European trashings were in Holland in 1991. By 1993, when a demonstration of 500,000 peasants in Bangalore ended with the physical destruction of seed multinational Cargill's head offices in India, anarchists in the North were well aware of the much larger picture of militant campaigning against GM crops by peasant movements in Latin America and South Asia, providing opportunities for international solidarity around the issue. German autonomists squatted fields to prevent GM crop trials, leading to the cancellation of a third of them and many more being destroyed. In the UK, anarchists have played a large part in the over thirty groups comprising the Genetic Engineering Network, engaging both in campaigning and in direct-action. Over several years groups of "crop-busters" conducted nightly raids to destroy trial crops of GM maize, sugar beet and oilseed rape, until in 2004 the Blair government dropped its plans for commercial growing of GM crops. More broadly, anarchist political culture displays a strong attraction among many to low-tech, "simple living" lifestyles, the most prominent examples being the promotion of small-scale organic farming and of cycling as an alternative to car culture.

On the other hand, there is a multitude of examples for integration and even development of technological systems among anarchists. Activists have assimilated email and mobile phones into their communication networks like everybody else. Internet websites are used to publicise and coordinate events, often using software that enables collaborative authorship. The Internet is also an immense archive for the self-documentation of social struggles in the past decade, including their explicitly anarchist constituents. However, anarchists have taken a step further by more thoroughly integrating — and even developing — information and communication technologies. Many activist websites host a discussion forum and/or an online chat room. The movement has a number of electronic media hubs, including the global Indymedia network. The latter often holds web-based meetings and has a functioning process for consensus decision-making online. There are also numerous intersections between the anarchist and the open source / free software movements. Many anarchists are talented programmers, mostly using GNU/Linux operating systems and other open-source applications to develop software for use by social movements. In Europe such activists currently operate over thirty HackLabs, community spaces with computers and Internet access which also act as hubs for political organising.

Historically, anarchists' attitudes towards technology display a similar ambivalence, oscillating between a bitter critique driven by the experiences of industrialism, and an almost naive optimism around scientific development and its enabling role in creating a post-capitalist society. Rooted in the nineteenth-century working class movement, anarchist activists and writers were well aware of the displacement of workers by machines, and of the erosion of producers' autonomy as household and artisan economies were displaced in favour of a production process in which the machines themselves dictates the pace, stages and outcomes of work. Thus Proudhon writes (1847:ch.4):

> Whatever the pace of mechanical progress; though machines should be invented a hundred times more marvellous than the mule-jenny, the knitting-machine, or the

> cylinder press; though forces should be discovered a hundred times more powerful than steam, — very far from freeing humanity, securing its leisure, and making the production of everything gratuitous, these things would have no other effect than to multiply labor, induce an increase of population, make the chains of serfdom heavier, render life more and more expensive, and deepen the abyss which separates the class that commands and enjoys from the class that obeys and suffers.

On the other hand, many anarchists saw in industrial progress something desirable and beneficial, as long as social relations were altered. Thus Kropotkin, despite his image as a proto-ecologist and critic of industry, cited "the progress of modern technics, which wonderfully simplifies the production of all the necessaries of life" as a factor reinforcing what he optimistically saw as a prevailing social tendency towards no-government socialism (Kropotkin 1910). His belief in the ability of technology to improve workers' conditions led him to state that after the revolution "factory, forge, and mine can be as healthy and magnificent as the finest laboratories in modern universities", envisioning a proliferation of mechanical gadgets and a centralised service industry that would relieve women of their slavery to housework as well as making all manner of repugnant tasks no longer necessary (Kropotkin 1916:ch.10). This approach, shared with Marx, was echoed more recently by Murray Bookchin in his wildly techno-optimistic "Post-Scarcity Anarchism" (Bookchin 1974).

After the first World War, well-known anarchists such as Malatesta, Goldman and Rocker continued to advocate a liberated industrial modernity, under workers' control through their own economic and industrial organizations. In Rocker's formulation, "industry is not an end in itself, but should only be a means to ensure to man his material subsistence and to make accessible to him the blessings of a higher intellectual culture. Where industry is everything and man is nothing begins the realm of a ruthless economic despotism" (Rocker 1938). Overall, anarchists saw mechanised industrial processes as dominating under capitalist conditions, but not inherently so, and were confident that the abolition of the class system would also free the "means of production" from their alienating uses under private ownership and competition.

Despite their communist or syndicalist commitments, then, most past anarchists shared the myopia that continues to pervade official and everyday discussions of technology today. The idea of progress is taken for granted, and technology is understood piecemeal, as an amalgamation of technologies that can be used for good or bad ends, but are fundamentally neutral in themselves.

Domination and the Technological Complex

At the margins of society's prevailing technological optimism, there have been several critical voices which discussed modernity's increasing technological mediation of nature and the alienation generated thereby. In *Technics and Civilisation*, Lewis Mumford (1934) traced the historical development of technology from the Middle Age clock, arguing that moral, economic and political choices have shaped technological society, ending in a what he saw as a spiritually barren civilisation, based only on productivity. Against the notion of inevitable machine dominance, Mumford suggests that the "esthetic" of the machine, based on observation directly from nature and the balancing of functionality against form, can be absorbed and used in a rational, grassroots-communist society geared towards "Handsome bodies, fine minds, plain living, high thinking, keen perceptions, sensitive emotional responses and a group life keyed to make these

things possible and to enhance them — these are some of the objectives of a normalized standard." (399) Three further major works appeared in the 1960s. As a continuation of his philosophy of Being, Martin Hedegger (1977/1962) argued that the essence of technology was not in devices but in the "unconcealment" to humans of all beings whatsoever as objective, calculable, quantifiable, disposable raw material ("standing reserve") which is of value only insofar as it contributes to the enhancement of human power. "The essence of technology, as a destining of revealing, is the danger…The rule of enframing threatens man with the possibility that it could be denied to him to enter into a more original revealing and hence to experience the call of a more primal truth" (333). In *The Technological Society*, Jacques Ellul (1964) proposed a "sociological study of the problem of *Technique*" — the latter being a term for the sum of all techniques, of all means to unquestioned ends, the "new milieu" of contemporary society. All individual techniques are ambivalent, intended for good ends but also contributing to the ensemble of Technique. Unlike Mumford, Ellul through that the artificial milieu had become autonomous and unstoppable. A similar fatalism was expressed by Marcuse, who in *One Dimensional Man* (1964) argued that technological advancement, contrary to traditional Marxist expectations, had created affluent capitalist societies characterised by public docility and the unlimited ability to domesticate dissent. Each of these critiques, it will be seen, is packaged into its own, very specific set of philosophical commitments and biases. Mumford's mythologised history, Hedegger's ontology, Ellul's existential theology and Marcuse's Frankfurt- school Marxism — all are inseparable from their authors' treatment of technology. Such controversial "surpluses of meaning" (Ricreur 1976) disadvantage these critiques as points of departure for the present debate.

Recent critiques, which assume a more succinct analytical approach, offer a better place to start. In contemporary academic philosophy of technology, "little needs to be said concerning the 'neutrality' of technology. Since the social-political nature of the design process has been exposed by Langdon Winner and others, few adhere to the neutrality of technology thesis" (Veak 2000:227).

Contemporary critics of technology invariably stress that this is an erroneous notion, since it disregards how the technical or from-design structure of people's surroundings delimits their forms of conduct and relation. As Winner (1985:11–12) argues, "technologies are not merely aids to human activity, but also powerful forces acting to reshape that activity and its meaning":

> As technologies are being built and put into use, significant alterations in patterns of human activity and human institutions are already taking place…the construction of a technical system that involves human beings as operating parts brings a reconstruction of social roles and relationships. Often this is a result of the new system's own operating requirements: it simply will not work unless human behavior changes to suit its form and process. Hence, the very act of using the kinds of machines, techniques and systems available to us generates patterns of activities and expectations that soon become "second nature".

The point of such an analysis is to politicise the discussion of technology on a basic level. In mainstream discussions, political issues around technology are almost exclusively framed as matters of government "policy", and brought in only as an accessory to debating the cost-benefit analysis of particular technologies, or their environmental side effects. To politicise the debate at its base is to argue that technologies both express and reproduce the patterns of collective organisation in society, and that in many cases they are constitutive of these relations. It would mean

drawing attention "to the momentum of large-scale sociotechnical systems, to the response of modern societies to certain technological imperatives, and to the ways human ends are powerfully transformed as they are adapted to technical means" (21).

Winner cites decades of professedly racist transport planning in Long Island, the post-1848 Parisian thoroughfares built to disable urban guerilla, and pneumatic iron molders introduced as a deliberate anti-union measure in Chicago, as examples of instrumentally dominating deployment of technology. Here, there is an identifiable agent acting out of the desire to control, exploit or overpower others. However, in all these cases we can also see technical arrangements that precede the actual use of technology in the determination of social results. This means that there are predictable social consequences to deploying a given technology or set of technologies. "There are instances in which the very process of technical development is so thoroughly biased in a particular direction that it regularly produces [contested] results…the technological deck has been stacked in advance to favor certain social interests and some people were bound to receive a better hand than others" (25–6). In other words, new technologies introduced into an unjust society are likely to exacerbate injustice.

Let me offer a modified account of this dynamic, with contemporary examples. Since new technologies must be integrated into the existing socio-technological complex, the latter's *strong bias* in favour of certain patterns of human interaction will inevitably shape the *design* of these technologies and the ends towards which they will be deployed de-facto. As anarchists and many others see it, the constraints that the existing socio-technological complex already places on social interaction have a specifically exploitative and authoritarian nature. Workplace technologies from the robotised assembly line to the computerised retail outlet subordinate workers to the pace and tasks programmed into them, reducing the workers' opportunities to exercise autonomous judgement and to design and run the production process themselves. The capitalist bias of modern society is also abundantly present in the mindsets shaping technological development. Today in every developed country, corporations exert a great deal of influence on every stage of the technological research, design and implementation process. In each country, industry spends pound billions on research and development — whether it's done in-house, through funding for universities or in public-private partnerships. Academia is also encouraged to commercialise its research, in a combination of funding pressures created by privatisation and direct government hand-outs. As universities look to generating lucrative spin-off companies, it makes perfect sense to them to consider the commercial relevance of research paramount. As for centralised policy-making on development, official corporate representatives often sit in committees of bodies such as the UK academic Research Councils which allocate huge amounts of funding. Unofficially, there are industry-funded lobby groups (the Royal Society's recent donors included BP (£1.4 million), Esso UK, AstraZeneca, and Rolls-Royce amongst others), as well as a clear revolving door between the corporate world and senior academic and government posts relevant to science and technology policy (Goettlich 2000, Ferrara 1998). British former science minister, Lord Sainsbury, has substantial investment interests in companies that hold key patents in biotechnology. The 2005 Reith Lecturer was nanotechnology pioneer Lord (Alec) Broers, who is President of the Royal Academy of Engineering, Chairman of the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee, former Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University and for 19 years a senior research manager at IBM. Under such conditions it is not surprising that the decision on the viability of a technological design "is not simply a technical or even economic evaluation but rather a political one. A technology is deemed viable if it conforms to the existing relations of power" (Noble 1993:63,

cf. Noble 1977, Dickson 1974). As for ends, it should not be surprising that a society biased towards hierarchy and capitalism generates the entirely rational impetus for the surveillance of enemies, citizens, immigrants and economic competitors. In such a setting, technologies such as strong microprocessors, broadband communication, biometric data rendering, face- and voice-recognition software have inevitably found their way into today's "networked, polycentric, and multidimensional" web of state- and corporate surveillance (Lyon 2003). For anarchists, the hypothetical question about whether technology can ever be in the "right" hands is trumped by the obvious point that it is, in fact and beyond refute, obviously in the wrong hands. Technological development, then, structurally encourages the continuation and extension of Western society's already-pervasive centralisation, rationalisation and competition, the state and capitalism. On this reading, there is "an ongoing social process in which scientific knowledge, technological invention, and corporate profit reinforce each other in deeply entrenched patterns, patterns that bear the unmistakable stamp of political and economic power" (Winner 1985:27).

Technologies not only encourage centralisation, but tend to fix it into place. This can be seen in how modern society has come to depend materially on the pervasive stability of large-scale infrastructures, whose dimensions are found in "systemic, society-wide control over the variability inherent in the natural environment" (Edwards 2003). Such an environment requires a high level of "technological fluency" in order to function in all social interactions, from the habitual to the specialised — effectively making it a prerequisite to membership in society. Infrastructures, for Edwards, "act like laws: They create both opportunities and limits; they promote some interests at the expense of others. To live within the multiple, interlocking infrastructures of modern societies is to know one's place in gigantic systems that both enable and constrain us". While infrastructure breakdowns are treated either as human error or as technological failure, few "question our society's construction around them and our dependence on them…infrastructure in fact functions by seamlessly binding hardware and internal social organisation to wider social structures" (ibid.).

Another important perspective to be added to this social critique of technology is derived from a historical analysis of technological waves, in fact an accelerating series of waves that continues to the present day. The theory of the wave-motion of the global economy led by technological development (Kondratieff 1922) is a matter of common currency. Contemporary scholars chart a history of consciously- manufactured technological waves separated by narrowing time-lapses, beginning with Portuguese and Spanish navigation advances in the fifteenth century, followed by the wave led by printing in the seventeenth, steam and iron around 1800, steel and electricity later that century, heavy industry at the beginning of the twentieth century, the successive waves of automobile, atomic and semiconductor technologies throughout that century, the most recent biotechnological wave, and the coming wave of nano-technologies (Spar 2001, Perez 2002). Reviewing the impacts of successive waves, Mooney (2005:14) concludes:

> History shows that, at least initially, every new technological wave further destabilizes the precarious lives of the vulnerable…Those with wealth and power are usually able to see (and mould) the technological wave approaching and prepare themselves to ride its crest. They have the economic flexibility to survive, as well as the protection afforded by their class. But a period of instability (created by the technological wave) washes away some parts of the "old" economy while creating other economic opportunities…Each artificial technology wave begins with the depression or ero-

> sion of the environment and the marginalized who are dragged under. As the wave crests, it raises up a new corporate elite.

The observation could also be extended back to agriculture and the aquaduct. At any rate, just as capital accumulated itself in the first industrial revolution through popular immiseration, so do anarchists have every reason to expect contemporary waves of technology to expand state control and corporate wealth by massive dislocation, deskilling, and unemployment. One does not have to be an anarchist to be a technological pessimist, but for contemporary anarchists it would seem that technological optimism is definitely not on the cards.

While the argument so far draws attention to the existing socio-technological complex into which new technologies are inserted, critics argue that many technologies have an *inherent* political nature, whereby a given technical system by itself commands or induces specific patterns of human relationships. Winner analyses arguments of this type into four versions. Combining them, we can say that the claim here is that the adoption of a given technical system *actually requires* (or) *is strongly compatible with* the creation and maintenance of a particular set of social conditions, *in the operating environment of that system* (and/or) *in society at large*. In some cases this is eminently clear — the possession of a nuclear weapon demands the introduction of a centralised, rigidly hierarchical chain of command to regulate who may come anywhere near it, under what conditions and for what purposes. It would be insane to do otherwise. More mundanely, the daily infrastructures of our large-scale economies — from railroads and oil refineries to cash crops and microchips — also introduce requirements towards centralisation in their production and maintenance. On the other hand, however, solar and wind energy are argued by environmentalists to be highly compatible with a decentralised society that engenders local energy self- reliance. This is because of their availability for deployment at a small scale, and because their production and/or maintenance require only moderate specialisation. On the third hand, BP now operates wind-farms. And despite examples of worker self-management, Winner concludes that "the available evidence tends to show that many large, sophisticated technological systems are in fact highly compatible with centralized, hierarchical managerial control" (Winner 1985:35).

Whether this is applicable to any particular technology is a matter that Winner leaves open to debate, both factual and political. However, he argues that the structures of Western society clearly incorporate a second, "technical Constitution" — deeply-entrenched aspects of society that go hand in hand with the development of modern industrial and post-industrial technology, "regimes of instrumentality" under which we are obliged to live in each area of technical/functional organisation. These regimes consist in a dependency on highly centralised organisations; a tendency towards the increased size of organized human associations ("gigantism"); distinctive forms of hierarchical authority developed by the rational arrangement of socio- technical systems; a progressive elimination of varieties of human activity that are at odds with this model; and the explicit power of socio-technical organisations over the "official" political sphere.

Anarchist Concerns

While the critique of technology offered by non-anarchist writers already provides useful markers for anarchists on an as-is basis, there are some remaining issues to be sharpened, particu-

larly around the authors' concrete proposals for change and the prevailing political assumptions underlying them.

For Winner, change is proposed on the basis of a democratic agenda. As he argues elsewhere, new technological forms should be developed "through the direct participation of those concerned with their everyday employment and effects". Surprisingly, in the same piece Winner seems to forget everything he knows when suggesting an understanding of technology only as a "means that, like all other means available to us, must only be employed with a dully informed sense of *what is appropriate…a* clear and knowledgeable sense of which means are appropriate to the circumstances at hand". Be that as it may, as general maxims Winner proposes that: technologies be given a scale and structure of the sort that would be immediately intelligible to non-experts; be built with a higher degree of flexibility and mutability; and be judged according to the degree of dependency they tend to foster, those creating a greater dependency being held inferior (Winner 2002). Intuitively, it would appear that thoroughgoing decentralisation is the most likely strategy for delivering human-scale technologies and decision-making processes about them. However, this is something that Winner (1985:96) has already rejected:

> given the deeply entrenched patterns of our society, any significant attempt to decentralize major political and technological institutions would require that we change many of the rules, public roles,and institutional relationships of government. It would mean that society move to increase the number, accessibility, relative power, vitality and diversity of local centers of decision making and public administration. This could only happen by overcoming what would surely be powerful resistance to any such policy. It would require something of a revolution. Similarly, to decentralize technology would mean redesigning and replacing much of our existing hardware and reforming the ways out technologies are managed…[in both areas], any significant move to decentralize would amount to retro-fitting our whole society, since centralized institutions have become the norm.

Instead, Winner suggests implementing his program through "a process of technological change disciplined by the political wisdom of democracy…citizens or their representatives would examine the social contract implied by building [any new technological] system…[in new] institutions in which the claims of technical expertise and those of a democratic citizenry would regularly meet face to face"- presumably on equal footing. What all this amounts to is placing "moral limits on technological civilization" by constructing a different technological constitution, "a new regime of instrumentality" that will define socio-technological relations (55–7 and 155). By this Winner cannot but mean a contractarian resolution maintaining over the entire social body — in other words, government. This is clearly unacceptable, valuable as the preceding critique may be. Anarchists are bound to reject suggestions for a unitary, society-wide policy on *anything* — not only technologies — since such suggestions ultimately rest on the assumption that policy is to be authoritatively implemented.

On a more immediate level, anarchists would be extremely doubtful about any prospect of social reform through dialogue between citizens and governments, about the extent of the concessions that can be expected from the states and corporations that define present socio-technical development, and about whether any agenda promoted through lobbying or elections can result in anything but its absorption into a largely- unchanged trajectory of the system's momentum. In

addition, many anarchists would argue that today there is quite obviously a general trend *away* from democracy around the world, most markedly in advanced capitalist societies, making the prospects for its introduction into a wholly new sphere seem unlikely.

But the disagreement runs deeper. Winner's rejection of decentralist perspectives is not only due to immediate political difficulties. Ultimately, he falls into only a slightly modified version of the unquestioning acceptance of progress and industrial modernity which he attacks earlier. Today, he says, unlike under the immature industrialism that confronted figures like Kropotkin or G. D. H. Cole, it is impossible to "imagine an entire modern social order based upon small-scale, directly democratic, widely dispersed centres of authority", unthinkable that "decentralist alternatives might be feasible alternatives on a broad scale" (96) and, as a result, necessary to reject decentralisation. I would suggest that, for anarchists, the significant point about this claim is that they would be moved to agree with it. The choice is indeed one between decentralisation and large-scale industrial modernity — and anarchists are going to have to finally bite the bullet and admit that they would go for the former. Indeed decentralisation cannot sustain modern industrial society as we know it. As a result, anarchists must admit that their political agendas imply a retro-fitting process of decentralisation that carries with it quite a significant roll-back into low-tech living.

Considerations of practicality are hardly the rub here — there is no reason to think that technological decentralisation is any less practical than the rest of the sweeping social changes anarchists propose; they are, after all, precisely interested in "something of a revolution". And since they want consistently to maintain the decentralised, voluntarist model for the process of revolutionary change itself, they must agree that whatever one's speculations about the circumstances of anarchist social transformation, it will inevitably include a great degree of diversity, with communities making their own choices about their desired level of technological "advance" — including, legitimately, low ones.

Another anti-capitalist critic of technology, Andrew Feenberg, takes a clearly Marxist position by looking to struggles over technology's design and implementation for counter-hegemonic significance. In his framework, technologies are "ambivalent" since the hegemonic order needs to actively "bind applications to hegemonic purposes since science and technique can be integrated into several different hegemonic orders. That is also why new technology can threaten the hegemony of the ruling groups until it has been strategically encoded…modern technology opens a space within which action can be functionalized in either one of two social systems, capitalism or socialism, it is an ambivalent or 'mutable' system that can be organized around at least two hegemonies, two poles of power between which it can 'tilt'" (Feenberg 2002:79, cf. Feenberg 1999). Feenberg's socialism will promote "attributes of technology compatible with a wider distribution of cultural qualification and powers" including "the vocational investment of technical subjects [*sic!*] in their work, collegial forms of self-organization, and the technical integration of a wide range of life-enhancing values, beyond the pursuit of power and profit" (2002:35). Surveying "resistances of a new type immanent to the one-dimensional technical system", Feenberg calls for the "democratic rationalisation" of technology, providing "new forms of control from below" that would privilege the interests and values of workers and communities currently excluded from technical decision-making. Thus the transition to socialism is "conceived as an extended period of *democratic struggle over technology and administration* with the aim of bringing the strata located in the post of capital under social control…Socialism would gradually reduce the operational autonomy of managerial and expert personnel and reconstruct the divided and deskilled

labor process they command. This reconstruction would be the essential content of the transition, not a distant utopia" (61).

Here again, because of the central place of voluntarism and diversity in anarchists' picture of the process of social transformation, they will be resistant to any counter-hegemonic agenda. I leave aside here the tangled evolution of the concept of hegemony, from its origins with Antonio Gramsci's definition thereof as "the social basis of the proletarian dictatorship and Worker's State" (Gramsci 1926:180) to its recent use to legitimate the realisation and suppression of socialism under the banner of liberal democracy (Laclau and Mouffe 1986, Mouffe 1992). Beyond these particulars, the point is that anarchists are not interested in articulating a counter-hegemonic perspective but an anti-hegemonic one. As indicated by the discussion of anarchism's open-ended dimension in chapter 3, what is at issue is a bifurcation of the present-day monoculture of social relations in favour of a segmentary, polycentric and literally uncontrolled development of local realities.

Finally, and perhaps most fundamentally, we should address the discrepancy of political epistemologies — the inevitably different coordinates along which the political world is constructed — among the reviewed critiques and an anarchist outlook. Although they offer substantial critiques of power, something further needs to be said to express the constitutive and embedded role that anarchists attribute to domination and hierarchy in present social structures — not only in terms of macro-level social institutions but also in those of the micro-politics of everyday life.

In an explicitly anarchist account coming from the HackLab milieu, Xabier Barandiaran suggests a core distinction between *technique* as "the particular application of a piece of knowledge to a predetermined problem", and *technology* as "the recursive application of a series of techniques and mechanisms to a space of reality" (Barandiaran 2003, my translation). As opposed to technique (which includes tool use), technology "generates, delimits and structure a real space (electronic, scientific, social…) since it is a recursive application in which the result of the application returns to be (re)utilized on the same space; which in turn is submitted to those techniques and mechanisms, etc".

Barandiaran differentiates four simultaneous movements of techno-social structuration. These are not to be understood as a linear progression; rather, technological structuration is a "metamachine" wherein the output connects with the input in a spiral or retroactive process. All moments interrelated and put together constitute a technological system:

1. *A code is generated:* This is the scientific moment and relates to knowledge and to the creation of understanding and discourse. The generation of a code involves digitization (separation of contimuums into discreet units — many of them binary and normative — good/gad, correct/incorrect etc.), the selection of elements or components, taxonomies (classifications) of those elements, creation of conjoined procedures for control, analysis and manipulation (diagnosis, measures, etc.) and the abstraction of a series of relations and rules of calculus among the signs that define the code (mathematical equations, structural causals, generative rules, instructions for manipulation etc.). The code orders and operationalises (permits an organised operation of) a domain of the real (social or material) for the construction of machines in that domain.

2. *Machines based on the code are built.* Once created, the code (or piece of knowledge) permits the design of machines that produce order, control, objects, or diverse changes — social,

biological, physical etc. The codes are also utilized for objectifying or to codifying diverse phenomena (organisms, material, minds, collectives, markets, events, etc.) in the form of machines and submitting them to manipulation, control and order. A machine is the abstraction in a code of the transformations that a user exercises on an operand (thus the forces on the movement of a wheel, castigation or soothing on the conduct of an individual, or a filtration system on the flow of information on the web).

3. *The machines are realised/implemented:* These machines are realised or implemented in artefacts, institutions, devices, symbols, products, factories, etc. When the system or phenomenon is anterior to the machine (to its description in a codified domain), the machine is utilized to pre-decide its operation, control it or manipulate it. In this way phenomena come to be machines already when we begin to interact with them on the basis of their compression into machines.

4. *The machines are inserted into a technological complex:* Recently created machines are inserted into a complex context of other machines and social processes: in the conjunction of social institutions, in the market, in quotidian life, etc…transforming that environment but at the same time being transformed and re-utilised for that complex ecosystem of machines and codes, of devices and practices, that are *technological systems*. In many cases the final technological complex reinforces the knowledges and the codes on which it is supported, since it permits a more effective manipulation of that domain (reducing it, as many times as it is possible to control, with that code). Some machines have been operating in reality for so long that that have produced orders and structures that we consider normal and normalised, others irrupt violently in those contexts producing refusal or illusions around the changes they bring about. In any case we live surrounded by machines, with multiple technological systems in our way that define and delimit what we are and what we can do (which is not to say that they *determine* our possibilities).

Barandiaran suggests understanding phenomena such as biotechnology as technological processes which "establish or discover a code (the genetic one) and a series of manipulation- and control procedures to build machines for the production of genetically modified food, for control of genetic illnesses, genetic banks, etc. Machines that adapt and socialize themselves through the interfaces of the market and other legal machineries (such as biotech patents) sustain and assure a relation of forces in that technological dominion" (Barandiaran 2003). Through this schema Barandiaran offers an anarchist critique of power-relations in society, which "technologises" a recognisably post-structuralist framework. Domain (*dominio*) is inherent not only in technological design and implementation but in the activity of codifying that sustains the entire recursive process. The conjunction between power and knowledge recalls Foucault, in whose directed studies of social processes Barandiaran reads an expression of how "diverse forms of knowledge (psychiatry, teaching, criminology) develop a series of codes with which to classify and objectify human beings and their conduct (mad/sane, successful/failing, criminal/non-criminal)". On the basis of these codes are developed "devices or disciplinary 'machines' of caution, normalising sanction and scrutiny (surveillance as well as medical, pedagogical, and legal examinations) and institutions that apply them (the psychiatric hospital, the school, the prison)". A technological disciplinary regime is thus constituted, generating power relations that structure the permitted and un-permitted and produce forms of subjectivity and individuality.

So much for the substance of the critique. As a soundboard and demonstration of its significance, I would like briefly to turn to what is expected to be the largest technological wave in history — one driven by multi-technological convergence on the atomic scale.

The Case of Nanotechnology

The term nanotechnology (or “nanotech”) refers to a technological platform involving the manipulation of matter at the atomic and molecular scale (1 billion nanometres = 1 metre) — literally moving atoms around and creating new molecules (Bhushan 2004, ETC Group 2003). On the nano-scale, matter changes its properties (colour, strength, reactivity, conductivity) as the rules of quantum mechanics come into effect. At present, most commercial nanotech involves nano-particles — novel materials used in a variety of products: paints, cosmetics, tyres, clothing, glass and computers among others. Titanium dioxide, widely used in sunblock because of its ability to scatter UV light, is white at the conventional scale. Artificial, 20nm wide TO2 particles retain their scattering properties but are transparent, providing the basis for see-through sunblock. Another particle at the centre of commercial hype is a new carbon molecule called the carbon nano-tube (illustrated left — cf. Smalley et.al 2004), a cylindrical mesh of carbon atoms. Measuring only a few nanometers across, nano-tubes are roughly one hundred times stronger than steel and one sixth the weight, with better conductivity than copper and a huge number of commercial applications (from tyre fibres through electric conductors and on to receptacles for targeted delivery of pharmaceuticals into the body).

Because new nanoparticles’ size creates physical properties to which the natural world is not adapted, they have unexplored toxicities and environmental effects. Most nano-particles are small enough to pass through the blood-brain barrier, let alone the skin. Issues like toxicity, however, generate concerns that industry easily codes as “risk”, and often successfully placates with regulation — on which it has strong influence. At any rate, as of summer 2005 there is exactly zero regulation of nano- products. The critique of technology explored above, however, enables us to go beyond risk and examine the political consequences of such technological advance. One is the disruption of weaker economies, as major sources of export income for “developing” countries, from iron and copper to rubber and cotton, become replaced by things like nano-tubes and nano-fibres. For example, the use of carbon nano-tubes in the electronics industry looks set to render copper obsolete. The most harsh impacts of these changes will be felt not by large corporations dealing in copper (who can diversify) but by local communities who depend on copper mining. This is not to say that copper mines are sustainable or nice places to work — but their abandonment ought to be the result of social choice.

Beyond specific applications, a novel set of concerns is introduced by the prospect of technological convergence — the idea that nanotech will enable the eventual merger of materials technology, biotechnology, information technology and cognitive neuroscience. Where genetic engineering breaks through the species barrier (e.g. splicing a fish or a rabbit with a jellyfish gene to make them glow fluorescent green), nanotech breaks the through life/non-life barrier (e.g. a fifth DNA “letter” that has been engineered at the Scripps Institute in California). Nano-enabled convergence attracts massive interest and investment from all major corporations, including almost all Fortune500 companies. This is not surprising since converging technologies have a huge potential for enhancing corporate concentration. Just as the biotechnology revolution resulted

in the convergence of chemical, pharmaceutical, seed and materials interests into "life sciences" companies such as Bayer and BASF, nanotechnology is likely to result in even more extensive cross-sector monopolies — a new economic phenomenon which the law is at present unequipped to deal with. For example, IBM and NEC are currently competing over who has the key patents to carbon nano-tubes. Whichever company wins out will no longer be only a computer company but also one involved in materials, pharmaceuticals etc. Technological convergence on the nano-scale is thus an obvious power-multiplier for corporations.

Alongside corporations, one of the largest single funders of nanotech research is the US department of defence, which is actively pursuing nanotechnology as a platform for military and surveillance technologies (there is a Centre for Soldier Nanotechnology at MIT). For example, the US government's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) has set up the DARPA/MEMS program to "develop the technology to merge sensing, actuating, and computing in order to realize new systems that bring enhanced levels of perception, control, and performance to weapons systems and battlefield environments" (DARPA 2005). One of these is known as "Smart Dust" — tiny sensors which would pick up a variety of information from environmental conditions such as movement and light to persons' DNA signature. Entirely self-sustaining on solar energy, these sensors would be able to turn themselves on, recognise other sensors in the vicinity, and create a wireless network among themselves. This would enable to spread a net of sensors on a battlefield, or an urban environment, and then send comprehensive information back to a central command with enough computing power to crunch the data. The target size for Smart Dust "motes" is 1mm cube, increasingly approximated by existing developments (illustrated left placed on a coin, from Warneke 2004), and it is a safe bet that further reduction and comprehensive sensing capabilities are only a matter of time.

Here, a point needs to be made about the previously-unthinkable levels of social control that converging technologies enable. Nanotech-enabled devices like Smart Dust raise the serious possibility of a full-blown Panopticon society (Bentham 1995/1787, Foucault 1977:195) — the state being able to literally know who is doing what, where, all the time. But a bit of further speculation raises an even more disturbing possibility. Earlier we looked at how modern infrastructures fix centralisation into place. Now we can take a further step and observe how the technologies we are now discussing are able to actually transform "superstructure" into "base" by technologically encoding property and criminal law into material reality. Already, "Terminator" seeds are genetically engineered to prevent re- germination from their crop, rendering seed-saving not only illegal but physically impossible. Thus Monsanto's patent is no longer a legal chimera relying on the backing of state coercion, but a self-contained legal/coercive complex encoded into the seed itself. Nanotechnology can provide even more sophisticated mechanisms such as *conditional* termination, e.g. seeds containing a toxic layer encapsulated in a "smart" membrane, that will release them in response to a specific remotely-broadcast microwave signal (cf. Choi et.al. 2002). In a similar way, pervasive surveillance combined with nano-materials and low-level artificial intelligence may well create "smart" environments in which breaking the law is literally impossible — where materials and objects are programmed to behave in a certain way if an offence is detected. Such speculations need to be treated with care. It can be pointed out, for example, that even if such technologies truly enabled to extend the disciplinary logic of the prison to society as a whole, doing so would not necessarily be in the interest of the state. Full closure of subjects' autonomy would be self-defeating, since their sanity and, as a result, their productivity, depend on the existence of "spaces of transgression" (cf. Bataille 1986) wherein they know they

can get away with petty illegalities (e.g. cycling through a red light, shoplifting, trespassing). The state, then, could be expected to retain such spaces, but deploy technologies of social control that would enable it to comprehensively select and administer them. This would figuratively attach a throttle to social control, to be wrenched up or down as desired.

Actualising the Critique

Beyond the development, integration and application of critique, theoretical reflection on an anarchist politics of technology must needs involve a direct reflection on activists' concerns. Given what is at stake about technology from an anarchist perspective, and given the types of political engagement that anarchists would be drawn to, what kind of practical judgements would anarchists be likely to make about technologies? And what kind of strategies would follow on from these judgements? In the final section, I would like to suggest three strands that could be integrated into an experimental anarchist politics of technology. While all three are already present to some degree in anarchist political culture, my goal here is to ground them in the critique of technology presented above, and to examine the possibilities and limitations of each.

Anarchists who express critical positions on technology often find themselves on the defensive against the caricature of wanting to go "back to the caves", resulting in statements such as this:

> We are not posing the Stone Age a model for our Utopia, nor are we suggesting a return to gathering and hunting as a means for our livelihood…Reduced to its most basic elements, discussion about the future sensibly should be predicated on what we desire socially and from that determine what technology is possible. All of us desire central heating, flush toilets, and electric lighting, but not at the expense of our humanity. Maybe they are possible together, but maybe not. (*Fifth Estate* 1985)

The authors' use of a "civilised amenities vs. humanity" axis cannot be understood outside the specifics of their early anarcho-primitivist orientation (Millet 2004). However, speaking of technology in such terms really misses the point. While the jury may still be out on flush toilets, it is clear that according to the *Fifth Estate's* rule-of-thumb there are at least some technologies that are clearly *not* "possible" given what all anarchists "desire socially". Whatever one's vision of anarchist r/evolution or a free society, it would seem beyond controversy that anarchists cannot but approach some technological systems with unqualified abolitionism. Just to take the most obvious examples, anarchists have no interest whatsoever in advanced military technologies, or in technological systems specific to imprisonment, surveillance and interrogation — the stuff of the state (cf. Rappert 1999). Additionally, anarchists will probably be unified in judging some technological systems such as nuclear power or the oil industry to be so hopelessly unsustainable from an environmental point of view that they, too, could be safely excluded from their desires for society. As a result, it should be acknowledged that on the basis of the critique formulated above, at least some measure of technological abolitionism must be brought into the horizon of anarchist politics. How extensive a technological roll-back is envisioned is beside the point: the relevant question from an anarchist perspective is not where to to stop, but where to start.

Clearly, as far as existing technologies are concerned anarchists face certain limitations. Technological systems monopolised by the state are mostly out of reach at the moment, and others (the motorway system or the coal/oil/nuclear-powered energy grid) are so deeply entrenched in

everyday life that dismantling them would require a much larger consensus than is available at the moment. However, there are many new technologies that anarchists would clearly reject and which are still in the process of being developed and implemented, and are thus more vulnerable to attack. Here, then, we encounter the first element of an anarchist politics of technology.

Luddism

The original Luddite campaign of sabotage against new machinery in the hosiery trade began in Nottinghamshire in 1811, spreading in that and the following year to Lancashire, Yorkshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire until it was brutally repressed on direct orders from Parliament and the Crown. For the Luddites, the object of resistance was not framed as mere technical advance, but as technical advance promoting economic destabilisation and the erosion of livelihoods. Their declaration of war had as its target new frames and engines whereby, in their own words, "villainous and imposing persons are enabled to make fraudulent and deceitful manufactures to the discredit and utter ruin of our trade"; breaking into factories at night, they destroyed frames that they accused of making "spurious articles…and all frames whatsoever that do not pay the regular prices heretofore agreed to [by] the masters and workmen" (Anonymous1 1812:531). As Sale (1996:261–2) clarifies,

> It wasn't all machinery that the Luddites opposed, but "all Machinery hurtful to the Commonality"…to which their commonality did not give approval, over which it had no control, and the use of which was detrimental to its interests, considered either as a body of workers or as a body of families and neighbors and citizens. It was machinery, in other words, that was produced with only economic conseuquences in mind, and those of benefit to only a few, while the myriad social and environmental and cultural ones were deemed irrelevant.

Writing several decades later, Marx treated the Luddites with summary dismissal, seeing their struggle as an incoherent response to the introduction of machinery, while providing the pretext for state repression against the working class as a whole. "It took both time and experience", he says, "before the workpeople learnt to distinguish between machinery and its employment by capital, and to direct their attacks, not against the material instruments of production, but against the mode in which they are used" (Marx 1867). However, the whole point of the critique offered above is that it is not possible to distinguish between machinery and its employment by capital, since it already has the needs of capital encoded into it from the start. In retrospect, Marx (along with the anarcho-syndicalists) were myopic to the fact that machinery continues to pace the workers and circumscribe their autonomy even if they "own" it along with its product. On such a reading, the Luddites' uprising actually represents a coherent protest against destructive industrialisation advanced under the banner of technological necessity (cf. Robins and Webster 1983, Noble 1993:144–5).

The connection to contemporary anarchist politics of technology becomes clear when it is realised that the Luddites did not confront dislocated instances of technical change, but a technological wave that they, unlike the rich, could not foresee, shape to their interests and "ride". More than mere machine-breaking, then, contemporary anarchist Luddism is to be understood as a heading for all forms of abolitionist resistance to *new* technological waves which enhance

power-centralisation and social control, inequality and environmental destruction. Resistance to new technologies can involve a diverse array of direct action tactics — from physical destruction of products like GM crops through the sabotage of manufacturing facilities and laboratories and on to the disruption of the everyday economic activities of the corporations involved in the development of new technologies — all backed by public campaigning to expose, not only the potential risks and actual damage already caused by new technologies, but the way in which they consolidate state- and corporate power to the detriment of livelihoods and what remains of local control over production and consumption. In their immediate target, then, neo-Luddite struggles are by their nature defensive or preventative. But they also contain the opportunity for finding allies and putting a radical position forward through the attachment of a thoroughgoing critique of domination to Luddite actions. A great many of these tactics have already been rehearsed in the struggles against biotechnology and GM crops, which are now joined by nanotechnology at the centre of anarchists' Luddite agendas. Note that this position is entirely separate from any *moral* abolitionist arguments, referring for example to the Promethean hubris of genetic engineering. A neo-Luddite resistance to new technologies is a second-order *political* resistance to capital's strategies of consolidation and further self-valorisation.

Let me settle the apparent conflict between the abolitionist attitude to some technologies and anarchism's anti-hegemonic perspective invoked above. Speaking directly about the technological aspects of an anarchist trajectory, Hakim Bey (1985b) relies on an anti-hegemonic stance to argue that no type of limitation or exclusion can be countenanced. As he puts it,

> The squabbling ideologues of anarchism & libertarianism each prescribe some utopia congenial to their various brands of tunnel-vision, ranging from the peasant commune to the L- 5 Space City. We say, let a thousand flowers bloom — with no gardener to lop off weeds and sports according to some moralizing or eugenical scheme. The only true conflict is that between the authority of the tyrant and the authority of the realized self — all else is illusion, psychological projection, wasted verbiage.

Such an approach displays a mainstay of anarchist attitudes: radical open- endedness and preparation to embrace a thoroughgoing diversity. However, it remains insensitive to what should by now be clear, namely that launching and maintaining a space station would be impossible in a decentralised society striving towards a libertarian and egalitarian asymptote. Similarly, it is extremely hard to imagine how the levels of coordination and precision needed for nanotechnology development and other high technological enterprises could ever be achieved without the structure of motivations supplied by a profit economy and the arms race.

Hacking, Cracking and E-Piracy

So much for the Luddite dimension. We now arrive at the ambivalence considered at the outset: if anarchists are to take such a strong anti-technological stance, what of the fact that one of today's most advanced high-technological platforms — computer software and the Internet — draws such enthusiastic support from anarchists? And this, not only in terms of intensive use, but also to the degree that some of them participate in its very development as programmers?

On the basis of the analysis of technology espoused here, it is easy to see the source of such support. Though it is an anomaly in comparison to most technological systems, there is indeed

something to be said for “libertarian and communitarian visions based on the Internet’s technology, particularly its nonhierarchical structure, low transaction costs, global reach, scalability, rapid response time, and disruption- overcoming (hence censorship-foiling) alternative routing” (Hurwitz 1999). Though there is another side to this coin (e-consumerism, surveillance, isolation), it can at least be said that the structure and logic of the Internet as a technology are also highly compatible with decentralisation and local empowerment. The basic platform that the Internet is based on — the TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol / Internet Protocol) — is thoroughly decentralised from the start since it is computed locally in each client node. This enables a distributed network of computers to exchange packets of information with no centralised hub.

Ironically, this is one of the rare cases where a technology escapes the intentions of its progenitors. As is well known, the Internet was created by ARPA, precursor to very same DARPA which is now working on nanotech projects. The percursor and backbone of today’s Internet, ARPANet, was created in the late 1960s with the immediate objective of enabling communication between academics, but more broadly as part of a strategy to enable U.S. military communications to survive in the event of nuclear war. Decentralisation was introduced to prevent decapitation. However, the enduring result of ARPANet was the decentralised peer-to-peer network it created. It was TCP/IP’s reliability, easy adaptability to a wide range of systems, and lack of hierarchy that made it appealing for civilian use (Maslen 1996). The hard-wiring of decentralisation into the Internet’s technological platform created unintended consequences for the U.S. government — as far as enabling groups that threaten it also to enjoy communication networks that cannot be decapitated.

Another aspect of the Internet that is attractive to anarchists is the open, non-commercial exchange of information that it enables — a modified form of a gift economy. In traditional gift economies, actors give goods or services to one another without immediately receiving anything in return. Due to social norms and customs, however, actors can expect the recipient of their gift to reciprocate, even if in an unspecified manner and at an unspecified future date. Gift economies have been extensively studied by anthropologists in the context of tribal and traditional societies, but they can easily be discerned within any extended family or friendship network (Mauss 1935, Carrier 1991). Whereas traditional gift-giving is seen to take place between specific and mutually-familiar actors, adapting the logic of the gift to the Internet requires a few modifications (Kollock 1999). On email lists or newsgroups, where there is direct interaction between a closed group of individuals, I may expect reciprocation for my gift, not from the individual who received it, but from a third party. When I respond to another user’s request for information on an email list, for example, I reproduce the social code of gift-giving within that group. Because of this I can expect that someone — usually not the same individual — will make me a similar gift in response to a subsequent request on my behalf. Furthermore, information contributed through an email list often has a recipient about whom nothing is known to the giver (save their email address). Internet gifts are often even made without any specific recipient in mind — posting information on to a web page effectively makes a gift of it to anyone with Internet access. With web-posting, no specific agent can be pointed to as either the recipient or the potential reciprocator. As a result, rather than a gift economy the Internet is perhaps better described as enabling a system of “group generalised exchange” (Ekeh 1974, Yamagishi and Cook 1993). In such a system, group members pool their resources and receive the benefits that the pooling itself generates — effectively making large parts of the Internet into an “electronic commons” (Nyman 2001). The incentive to contribute to such a public goods-based system — as both campaigners and code-hackers con-

stantly do — can be motivated by altruism, the anticipation of reciprocity, the political will to disseminate certain information, and/or the intrinsic enjoyment of activities like programming.

The free software movement, largely self-defined as "a-political", needs to be briefly mentioned in this context. Though it does not necessarily involve Internet applications, the networks of programmers that jointly develop free software rely on it for exchanging code. Free software could hardly have become such an extensive enterprise if this could only be done on floppies or CDs. Now what is usually meant by the notion that the software is "free" is that its source code is non-copyrighted, and that it is distributed under a General Public License or another version of "copyleft" legal code that gives everyone the same right to use, study and modify it, as long as they keep the source-code available to others and do not restrict its further redistribution. Many free software spokespeople repeatedly dissociate their enterprise from any non-profit connotations. Following the Free Software Foundation (1996), it is often stated that free software is "free as in free speech, not as in free beer". The former, we are told, entails the *liberty* to do one's will with the software provided this same right is not restricted to others. The latter applies to software distributed *gratis*. Thus much software that is available for gratis download is still copyrighted. It is also, importantly, possible to sell free software, or to ask for payment for its development. This makes liberty absolutely distinct from matters of price.

This is pure fantasy. Since liberty includes the liberty to redistribute a piece of software for free, then after any initial payment for programming the client can distribute the software for free, and if they do not, the programmer inevitably will. The reality is simply that the overwhelming bulk of free software packages are available for download on the Internet, for free as in "free beer". Since licensing rights are out of the picture, the only revenue that can be made on free software is the initial payment. There can be derivative revenues for the developers, through selling user support services and the like, but the software itself, once it enters circulation, is from that point on effectively gratis. This is because each actor's liberty is realised in a context that structurally encourages group generalised exchange; the context of the Internet imposes certain coordinates under which people's rationality comes into play.

The ideological truth behind the speech/beer manoeuvre is that free software spokespeople want to convince companies that they could make money producing free software. Negotiating its tense position as an alternative within the capitalist economy, the mainstream of the free software movement takes great pains to emphasise that it is not challenging profit (Victor 2003). Thus the FSF (ibid.) responsibly warns that "When talking about free software, it is best to avoid using terms like 'give away' or 'for free', because those terms imply that the issue is about price, not freedom. Some common terms such as 'piracy' embody opinions we hope you won't endorse".

For anarchists, though, free software is attractive not because of the legal provisions of its production process, but primarily because it contains gratis, high- quality alternatives to the proprietary and monopolist software economy. The latter, already on an early critique, represents "a special form of the commodification of knowledge…the special properties of knowledge (its lack of material substance; the ease with which it can be copied and transmitted) mean that it can only acquire exchange value where institutional arrangements confer a degree of monopoly power on its owner" (Morris-Suzuki 1984) — i.e. intellectual property rights. One may add that these are more than mere "institutional arrangements", since they can be encoded into the technology itself as access-codes for software packages or online content. On such an optic, the collaborative development of free software like the Linux operating system and applications such as OpenOffice clearly approximate an informational anarchist communism. Moreover, for anarchists it is

precisely the logic of expropriation and electronic piracy that enables a radical political extension of the cultural ideals of the free manipulation, circulation and use of information associated with the "hacker ethic" (Himanen 2001). The space of illegality created by P2P (peer- to-peer) file-sharing opens up the possibility, not only of the open circulation of freely- given information and software as it is on the Internet today, but also of conscious copyright violation. The Internet, then, enables not only communist relations around information, but also the militant contamination and erosion of non-communist regimes of knowledge — a technological "weapon" to equalise access to information, eating away at intellectual property rights by rendering them unenforceable.

Do these realities of the Internet not throw a dent into the strong techno- scepticism offered above? One is tempted to think that perhaps the decentralised, liberatory logic of the Internet could be extended to other high technologies, enabling anarchists to retain an endorsement of technological advance as part of their political outlook. The answer, I think, is negative — and for a more fundamental reason than limitations such as the inequalities of access and the "digital divide" (Winstanley 2004). What gets missed in these discussions is that although the Internet itself may be inherently decentralised, and though it may encourage liberty and gratuity, its enabling infrastructures have the more usual characteristics of modern technological systems. It is, after all, computers, ocean-floor cables and, most starkly, satellites that stand at the background of Internet communication. And these are highly centralising technologies, requiring an enormous level of precision and authoritative coordination for production, maintenance and further development. The computer industry is also one of the most polluting and exploitative industries in existence. The production of a single six-inch silicon wafer (one of around 30 million produced every year) requires the following resources: 3,200 cubic feet of bulk gases, 22 cubic feet of hazardous gases, 2,275 gallons of deionized water, 20 pounds of chemicals, and 285 kilowatt hours of electrical power. And for every single six-inch silicon wafer manufactured, the following wastes are produced: 25 pounds of sodium hydroxide, 2,840 gallons of waste water, and 7 pounds of miscellaneous hazardous wastes (SVTC 2005). Sending a satellite into space on a standard sized-rocket like the Zenit-3SL emits 181 tonnes of carbon dioxide (FAA 1999) — fifteen times the current yearly emissions of an average British person (UNDP 2003). The appalling conditions of employees in computer factories in Mexico, China and Thailand are well documented (CAFOD 2004).

It may well be that a large difference can be made with recycling and innovative means of wireless computer communication, but what is clear is that technological decentralisation and the lack of a capitalist system of incentives would inevitably slow down the manufacture and distribution of new computers in a major way, and certainly halt the current speed of microelectronics development that rolls out new models each year. What this suggests, I think, is that within an anarchist perspective there is place for a disillusioned attitude towards ICTs, which would avoid casting the technology itself in an unproblematically enabling role as far as alternative social relations are concerned. However, as Barandiaran (ibid.) notes, this does not exclude acknowledging the technology's emancipatory potential within the confines of capitalism and extending the hacker ethic to a "subversive micropolitics of techno- social empowerment":.

> We believe that it is fundamental to work explicitly on the political dimension of information and communication technologies. We cannot but consider ourselves as open subjects of technopolitical experimentation…[affirming] the technological

space as a political space, and the hacker ethic as a way to experience (collectively) the limits of the codes and machines that surround us, to re-appropriate their possible sodo-politically relevant uses; inserting them into the autonomous social processes in which we situate our tecnopolitical practice (self-organised occcupied social centres and grassroots social movements)…constructing and deconstructing the interfaces, the networks and the data processing tools for liberated communication and interaction, experiencing them, in a open and participatory process that seeks social conflict and technical difficulty as spaces in which to construct ourselves for ourselves.

Reviving Creativity, Lo-Tech

Finally, it is possible to address the deeper core of the ambivalence framed at the outset. What is it that makes technology so popular as a cultural ideal, one into which anarchists have also been socialised? At least part of it is, quite obviously, the sense of wonder at human creativity. Technology symbolises the value people place on the uniquely human ways of influencing the material world, understanding the natural environment and fitting it to human desires. Tolkien (1964:25) traces this impulse to the mediation of nature through language, what he calls Magic.

> The human mind, endowed with the powers of generalisation and abstraction, sees not only *green-grass*, discriminating it from other things (and finding it fair to look upon), but also sees that it is green as well as being grass. But how powerful, how stimulating to the very faculty that produced it, was the invention of the adjective: no spell or incantation in Faerie is more potent. And that is not surprising: such incantations might indeed be said to be only another view of adjectives. A part of speech in a mythical grammar.

The value of this capacity, through which human beings acquire a sense of ability and mastery (effectively the actualisation of what was called "power-to" in chapter 6), is very hard to challenge. The issue here, however, is that the cultural ideal of technology, as it increasingly monopolises fascination with human creative power, does so while seamlessly appropriating it into a humanist enlightenment narrative of progress. What is actually the source of fascination is *technique*, as defined above. But technology as a cultural ideal obscures this source, just as technique is materially sublimated into a *social project of rationalised surplus- and capacity-building* (Mumford 1934, Ellul 1964). It the impulse to extract technique from its sublimation in progress, and to valorise it as an experience rather than a basis for unelected, recursive social application, that forms the basis for the "positive" aspect of an anarchist politics of technology. When it comes to technique, and even to its recursive application in a localised context, it is certainly possible to realise inventive/creative capabilities in a decentralised, liberatory and sustainable way. This is because there are at least some ways of intervention in the material world which anarchists *would* want to promote.

As we have said, technological decentralisation is a clear aspect of any reconstruction away from capitalism and the state. Along with the move to more-or- less local self-reliance, which in my impression anarchists overwhelmingly agree is an ecological necessity, any "positive scenario" for anarchists must admit that high- technological innovation would necessarily slow

down. It is even possible to admit that this optic implies that anarchists are "against civilisation", at least as a planetary institutional and cultural project of accelerating hyper-industrialism. As for "forfeiting the benefits" of concerted research and development, Mooney (2006) points out that with the most perennial bogey-man, human longevity, major advances have come from dramatic declines in infant mortality. These declines are overwhelmingly credited to low-tech improvements in public health services such as access to clean water and organized waste disposal systems — which are also the key to dealing with today's big killer diseases — malaria, cholera and dysentery. Sanitation is hardly an innovation, which emphasises the likelihood that health benefits may be due more to improved social organization than to the pursuit of new technologies.

But such a slow-down would also open a space for manifold forms of low-tech innovation in areas like energy, building and food production. This is relevant not only in terms of a "future society", but indicative of the course that techno-critical anarchists would be encouraged to take in their creation of material alternatives in the present tense. A move to local self reliance would mean that social transformation involves, in its material dimension, the sustained recycling or creative destruction of artificial material environments shaped by capitalism and the state. With the lack of centralised planning, ecological approaches associated with permaculture come to the fore. Permaculture, derived from "permanent culture", is narrowly defined as the design and maintenance of cultivated ecosystems which have the diversity, stability and resilience of natural ecosystems (Mollison 1988, Bell 1992). As a holistic approach to land use, permaculture aims for integration of landscape, people and "appropriate technologies" to provide food, shelter, energy and other needs. A permaculture design incorporates a diversity of species and interrelations between species, weaving together the elements of microclimate, annual and perennial plants, animals, water and soil management, and human needs to generate sustainable lifestyles based on site-specific ecological conditions. Such an approach aims to work with rather than against natural rhythms and patterns, promoting attitudes of "protracted and thoughtful observation rather than protracted and thoughtless action"; of looking at systems in all their functions rather than asking only one yield of them, and of allowing systems to demonstrate their own evolutions.

Permaculture is also, in its more politicised section, a world-wide movement of designers, teachers and grassroots activists working to restore damaged ecosystems and human communities. The political connection to anarchism begins from permaculture's emphasis on allowing ecosystems to follow their own, intrinsically determined course of development. The permaculture ethic of "care for the land and the people", transposed into broader cultural terms, would involve facilitating that self-development of the plant or the person, the garden or the community, each according to its own context — working with, rather than against, the organic momentum of the entity cared for. Whereas in monoculture (or industry, or existing social relations) what is sought after is the opposite — maximal control and harnessing of natural processes and labour power. Turning away from control as a social project *vis* the natural environment easily connects to the same negation *vis* society itself.

Finally, an important source for reviving decentralised, low-tech diversity are the revival of traditional and apocryphal science and lo-tech. Mexican peasant movements, in planning their project of genetically modified crop decontamination, avoided the appeal for expansive and expensive scientific testing by the state. Instead, their decision was to conserve safe species which are known not to be contaminated, and to initiate experimentation intended to see if there are traditional ways to discern whether a plant is genetically modified — observing its behaviour,

cycles etc. (Ribiero 2003, Vera Herrera 2004). More pro-actively, the whole array of traditional plant- knowledge, artisanship and craft, could be revived for any number of everyday life applications. So could apocryphal technologies — small-scale inventions that proliferated in the early twentieth century but were sidelined by patents and monopolies. While it is likely that people will still choose to have, on however localised a level, "technology" as the recursive application of technique and the machines that are part of it, communities will truly be able to judge whether they are appropriate on conditions such as sustainability, non-specialism, and a human scale of operation and maintenance that encourages creativity, conviviality and co-operation.

Chapter 8: Unholy Land

Anarchism, Nationalism and Israeli-Palestinian Peace

> The Jewish masses in every country…have given unstintingly out of their earnings in the hope that Palestine may prove an asylum for their brothers, cruelly persecuted in nearly every European country. The fact that there are many non- Zionist communes in Palestine goes to prove that the Jewish workers who have helped the persecuted and hounded Jews have done so not because they are Zionists, but [so that Jews] might be left in peace in Palestine to take root and live their own lives…Perhaps my revolutionary education has been sadly neglected, but I have been taught that the land should belong to those who till the soil.
>
> — Emma Goldman, letter to *Spain and the World* (London, 1938)

This final chapter differs from its predecessors in opening up a relatively new and unexplored topic for anarchists — their attitude to anti-imperialist struggles abroad. In this debate, the prism of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is offered as a case study in which some of the most interesting theoretical issues that anarchists confront are refractured. This chapter asks which approaches would make sense for anarchists regarding such struggles, with which they often express solidarity despite their "nationalist" overtones. In this chapter I also employ a speaking voice that is now doubly engaged — as an Israeli anarchist activist/scholar. I begin with a critique of the scant anarchist polemical writing on Palestine/Israel,[1] which is overwhelmingly "old school", and criticise the authors' lack of an action-oriented approach and adherence to antiquated formulations. Reviewing the traditional anarchist critique of nationalism, I then tackle what seems to be the overriding anarchist dilemma in the present context — the question of attitudes towards statehood, which has not received much attention in anarchist writing. Here, I examine four reasons why anarchists can, without contradiction, be seen to "support" the statist independence claims of an occupied people. I then analyse three "threads of intervention" in the social movement activity of anarchists and their allies in Israel/Palestine — linking issues, direct action and grassroots peacemaking — which can indicate directions for an anarchist strategy in the region.

Anarchism and Nationalism

With the conflict in Palestine/Israel so high on the public agenda, and with significant domestic and international anarchist involvement in Palestine solidarity campaigns (see later), it is surprising that the scant published anarchist contributions on the topic remain, at their best, irrelevant to the concrete experiences and dilemmas of movements in the region. At their worst,

[1] The terms Israel/Palestine and Palestine/Israel interchangeably refer to the land west of the Jordan river.

they depart from anarchism all together. Thus Wayne Price (2001) descends into very crude terms when proclaiming:

> In the smoke and blood of Israel/Palestine these days, one point should be clear, that Israel is the oppressor and the Palestinian Arabs are the oppressed. Therefore anarchists, and all decent people, should be on the side of the Palestinians. Criticisms of their leaderships or their methods of fighting are all secondary; so is recognition that the Israeli Jews are also people and also have certain collective rights. The first step, always, is to stand with the oppressed as they fight for their freedom.

Asking all decent people to see someone else's humanity and collective rights as secondary to anything — whatever this is, it is not anarchism. Why is Price's recognition of oppression not extended to oppressed Israelis, who are aware of their oppression by the occupation and conflict and fight to end it? It should be pointed out that no Israelis do so because they are "siding with the Palestinians", but more likely out of a sense of injustice, responsibility and solidarity. For some of them who are anarchists, it is also in order to liberate *themselves* from living in what they see as a militaristic, racist, sexist and otherwise unequal society. Why is no distinction being made between Palestinian oppressed and oppressors, or between the Palestinian population and the Palestinian state-in-waiting? This is especially strange since Price is aware that "on both sides of the Israeli/Palestinian divide, there are conflicts within each nation: between rulers and ruled, between capitalists and workers, between patriarchy and women" and so on. However, he immediately forecloses the discussion by asserting, patronisingly, that "blind nationalism leads each nation to think of itself as a bloc and to see the other side as a bloc: the Arabs, the Jews — ignoring the splits inside each nation". Again, all members of these nations "blind nationalists", even those who consciously take sides in multiple social conflicts *within* Israeli and Palestinian societies? It is only Price who is ignoring these conflicts, failing to seek his potential allies within them. It is worrying to note that such crass insensitivities (and worse) are widespread in the broader Palestine solidarity movement in the North, much more than among Palestinians. This is a sample of what anarchist critics have recently pointed to as the reality of anti-Semitism in the Left (Austrian and Goldman 2003, Michaels 2004, Shot by both sides 2005).

Meanwhile, Price is so confident about having access to the just and appropriate resolution that he permits himself to issue elaborate programs and demands, down to the finer details of the situation:

> Our [*sic!*] immediate demand is for the Israeli state to unilaterally withdraw from the occupied West Bank, Gaza,and East Jerusalem…Any settlers who remain must accept that they live in an Arab country…The Israelis should announce that they will recognize any government (or other arrangement) set up by the Palestinians, and will negotiate the return of Palestinian refugees to Israel proper or arrange just compensation for property stolen… Ultimately there will have to be some sort of "secular-democratic" or "binational" communal federation. And it will have to have some sort of self-managed non-capitalist economy…Meanwhile we must support the resistance of the Palestinian people. They have the right to self-determination, that is, to chose their leaders, their programs, and their methods of struggle, whatever we think.

A blank cheque, then, to any and every Palestinian elite under the banner of democracy. The statement's imperative tone also begs the question. To whom, precisely, are Price's "we" supposed to be issuing such elaborate demands? To the Israeli state, backed perhaps by the potent threat of embassy occupations and boycotts on oranges and software? Or maybe to the international community, or to the American state for that matter? In all cases this would be a "politics of demand" which extends state power undue recognition and legitimation through the act of demand itself — an approach far removed from central anarchist concerns and strategies.

In a rebuttal to Price, Ryan Chiang McCarthy (2002) takes issue with the lack of distinction between peoples and their rulers, and makes another encouraging step in calling for solidarity with libertarian forces on the ground. Unfortunately, he extends such solidarity only to struggles which fall within his prejudiced syndicalist gaze: "autonomous labor movements of Palestinian and Israeli workers…A workers' movement that bypasses the narrow lines of struggle…and fights for the unmediated demands of workers". Besides being entirely detached from reality — the prospects for autonomous labour movements are as bleak in Israel/Palestine as they are in the rest of the developed world — such a workerist myopia (or fetish) is also directly harmful. It reproduces the invisibility of the many important struggles in Palestine/Israel that do not revolve around work, and in which most anarchists happen to be participating. Meanwhile, stubborn class reductionism demarcates no less narrow lines of struggle than the ones which it criticises, and does the protagonists violence by forcing their actions into artificial frameworks. Thus Palestinians and Israelis are first and foremost "workers…manipulated by their rulers to massacre one another"; army refusal is a "sparkling [act] of class solidarity carried out across national lines" (most refuseniks are middle-class and self-declared Zionists); while "the nationalist poison…drives Palestinian proletarian youth to destroy themselves and Israeli fellow workers in suicide bombings". This may be anarchism, but it is of a fossilised variety.

The root of the problem, it would seem, is that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict introduces complexities that are not easily addressed from a traditional anarchist standpoint. The tension between anarchists' anti-imperialist commitments on the one hand, and their traditional rebuttal of the state and nationalism on the other, would seem to leave them at an impasse from which they can only fall back on the one-size- fits-all formulae of class struggle, or otherwise disengage from the debate altogether. In order to understand why this is so, let me look at anarchist critiques of nationalism.

Prevalent in anarchist literature is an epistemological distinction between the state and the nation (people, folk), the former understood as an artificial institution and the latter a natural grouping arising from shared ethnic, linguistic and/or cultural characteristics. elaborate statement of this distinction was made by Gustav Landauer, who saw in the folk an organic entity based on the uniquely shared spirit (*Geist*) — feelings, ideals, values, language, and beliefs — that unifies individuals into a community. For Landauer, the folk spirit is the basis for community, existed before the state and would return to do so in a free society. The presence of the state is what prevents such spirit from realising itself as "an equality of individuals — a feeling and reality — which is brought about in free spirit to unity and union" (Landauer 1907). Landauer also considered it possible to have several identities — he saw himself as a Jew, a German and a *southern* German. Elsewhere he wrote,

> I am happy about every imponderable and ineffable thing that brings about exclusive bonds, unities, and also differentiations within humanity. If I want to transform pa-

> triotism then I do not proceed in the slightest against the fine fact of the nation…but against the mixing up of the nation and the state, against the confusion of differentiation and opposition (in Lunn 1973:263).

Michael Bakunin (1871:324) had earlier argued that the "fatherland" [patria] represents a "manner of living and feeling" — that is, a local culture — which is "always an incontestable result of a long historic development". As such, the deep love of fatherland among the "common people…is a natural, real love". While the feeling of common belonging, most typically to a land, was in no way rejected by Bakunin (or by many other anarchists), it was its "corruption" under statist institutions that they rejected as "nationalism" — a primary loyalty to one's *nation-state*. Thus for Bakunin "political patriotism, or love of the State, is not the faithful expression" of how the common people love the fatherland, but rather an expression "distorted by means of false abstraction, always for the benefit of an exploiting minority".

Rudolf Rocker adopted Landauer's distinction in his *Nationalism and Culture*. A folk is defined as "the natural result of social union, a mutual association of men brought about by a certain similarity of external conditions of living, a common language, and special characteristics due to climate and geographic environment (Rocker 1937:200–1). However, Rocker clarifies that it is only possible to speak of the folk, as an entity, in terms that are location- and time-specific. This is because, over time, "cultural reconstructions and social stimulation always occur when different peoples and races come into closer union. Every new culture is begun by such a fusion of different folk elements and takes its special shape from this" (346). What Rocker calls the "nation", on the other hand, is the essentialist idea of a unified community of interest, spirit or race. This he sees as a creation of the state. Thus, like Landauer and Bakunin, it was the primary loyalty to one's nation state that Rocker sanctioned *as* "nationalism". At the same time, the traditional anarchist position expected that, unencumbered by the state, a space would be open for the self-determination and mutually-fertilising development of local folk cultures.

These attitudes to nationalism, however, had as their primary reference point the European nationalisms associated with existing states. The issue of nationalism in the national liberation struggles of stateless peoples received less attention. Kropotkin, for example, saw national liberation movements positively, arguing the removal of foreign domination was a precondition to the workers' realising their social consciousness (in Grauer 1994). However, what may be a necessary condition is by no means a sufficient one, and it could equally be argued that national liberation efforts can only end up creating new state-sponsored nationalisms.

With the case of Israel/Palestine the dilemma is essentially the same. The overwhelming majority of Palestinians want a state of their own alongside Israel. But how can anarchists who support the Palestinian struggle reconcile this with their anti- statist principles? How can they support the creation of yet another state in the name of "national liberation", which is the explicit or implicit agenda of almost all Palestinians? What is at work here is anarchists' critique that in their national liberation efforts, Palestinians are bowing to the idea that the state is a desirable institution, and lending themselves to nationalist illusions fostered by Palestinian elites, who will only become the source of their future oppression. This is the logic behind McCarthy's stance, as well as by other anarchists who state that "we support the fight of the Palestinian people…[and] stand with those Israelis who protest against the racist government…What we cannot do is support the creation of yet another state in the name of 'national liberation'" (Solidarity Federation 2002).

But there are two problems with such an attitude. First, it invites the charge of paternalism, whereby anarchists are pretending to be better than Palestinians at discerning their "real interests", while jettisoning the need for solidarity to happen on the terms articulated by the oppressed. Second, and more importantly, it leaves anarchists with nothing but empty declarations to the effect that that "we stand with and support all those who are being oppressed by those who have the power to do so" (ibid.), or that "it is not about forcing the Israeli state to respect the rights of Palestinians, nor supporting the formation of a new Palestinian state. Rather it is a question of starting to practice desertion, refusal, sabotage, attack, destruction against every constituted authority, all power, every state" (Friends of Al-Halladj 2002) . Again, while such sentiments are certainly in tune with longer-term anarchist aspirations, they also consign anarchists to a position of irrelevance in the present tense. On the one hand, anarchists could certainly agree that the establishment of a capitalist Palestinian state through negotiations among existing and would-be governments would only mean "the submission of the Intifada to a comprador Palestinian leadership that will serve Israel…[This is] related to processes occurring all over the world under the label of globalization, and to initiatives for regional trade cooperation designed to culminate in a 'free trade region of all Mediterranean countries'…economic hardship and social gaps will increase, the refugee problem will remain unsolved" (Anarchist Communist Initiative 2005). On the other hand, by disengaging from concrete Palestinian demands for a state these Israeli old-school anarchists have nothing to propose except "the demand for an entirely different way of life and equality for all the inhabitants of the region…a classless anarchist- communist society". This is all well and good, but what happens in the meantime?

"Supporting" Statehood?

While anarchists can surely do something more specific in solidarity with Palestinians than just saying that "we need a revolution", any such action would appear hopelessly "contaminated" with a statist agenda. The fact that anarchists nevertheless engage in on-the-ground actions of solidarity with Palestinian communities and groups requires us to grip this particular bull by its horns. Here, I believe there are at least four coherent ways in which anarchists can deal with the current dilemma.

The first and most pragmatic response is to acknowledge that there is indeed a contradiction here, but to insist that in a liminal, imperfect situation, solidarity is still worthwhile even if it comes at the price of inconsistency. Endorsement of Palestinian statehood by anarchists can be seen as a pragmatic position based on anti-imperialist commitments or even basic humanitarian concern. It doesn't do anybody any good to say to the Palestinians, "sorry, we'll let you remain non-citizens of a brutal occupation until after we're done abolishing capitalism". For this reason, one can see some kind of representative statehood for the Palestinians as the only short term solution, however imperfect, to their current oppression. Here anarchists recognise an unresolved tension in their politics, but a specific value judgement is made whereby one's anti- imperialist or humanitarian commitments are seen to take precedence over an otherwise fully uncompromising anti-statism. Attached to this is an interpretation of solidarity which is "not about supporting those who share your precise politics. It's about supporting those who struggle against injustice — even if their assumptions, methods, politics, and goals differ from our own" (ISM Canada 2004).

A second and separate response is to say that in fact anarchists can, without contradiction, support the establishment of a new Palestinian state. This is for the simple reason that Palestinians are already living under a state — Israel — and that the formation of a new Palestinian state creates only a quantitative change, not a qualitative one. Anarchists object to the state as a general scheme of social relations — not to this or the other state, but to the principle behind them all. It is a misunderstanding to reduce this objection to quantitative terms — the number of states in the world adds or subtracts nothing from anarchists' assessment of how closely the world corresponds to their ideals. Having one single world state, for example, would be as problematic for anarchists as the present situation (if not more so), although the process of creating it would have abolished some 190 states. So from a purely anti- statist anarchist perspective, for Palestinians to live under a Palestinian state rather than an Israeli state would be, at worst, just as objectionable. In such a situation, the pragmatic considerations mentioned in the first response above are no longer viewed as a trade-off, but as an entirely positive development. If the choice is between an Israeli or a Palestinian state controlling the West Bank and Gaza, while the basic objectionable social relations remain static, then clearly the latter option is purely preferable. A future Palestinian state, despite maintaining the basic scheme of statist social relations, and no matter how corrupt or authoritarian, would in any event be less brutal than the Israeli state is currently behaving towards the Palestinian population. Control by a civilian authority, though far worse than anarchy, is still far better than the military authority of Israel with its relentless humiliation and control over much of Palestinians' everyday lives.

One point to recognize in this discussion is that states (particularly nation-states) are consistently hostile to stateless peoples (and nomads). The Jews in pre-WWII Europe and the Palestinians are two among many examples of oppressed stateless peoples in the modern era. Note that while many Jews were citizens (often second- class citizens) of European countries at the beginning of the twentieth century, an important precondition for the Holocaust was the deprivation of Jews' citizenships, rendering them stateless. So here we may perhaps reiterate the fundamental anarchist dilemma around statehood — why do the oppressed always seek after their own mini- Leviathan? (Perlman 1983a)

A third response, informed by Kropotkin's note above, is taken in reference to the need to transcend this cycle. It is to say that anarchists can support a Palestinian state as a strategic choice, a desirable stage in a longer-term struggle. No-one can sincerely expect that the situation in Israel/Palestine will move from the present one to anarchy in one smooth, uninterrupted process. Hence, the establishment of a Palestinian state through a peace treaty with the Israeli state, although far from a "solution", may turn out to be a positive development on the way to more thoroughgoing revolutionary targets. The reduction of everyday violence on both sides could do a great deal to open the necessary political space for further struggles, and would thus constitute a positive development from a strategic point of view. In the region at present, all other anarchist agendas (anti-capitalism, feminism, ecology etc.) are subsumed under the ongoing conflict. While the fighting continues, it is impossible to even engage with people on broader issues and social struggles since the conflict silences them out. Thus, the establishment of a Palestinian state would form a bridgehead towards the flowering of other myriad social struggles, in Israel and in whatever enclave-polity emerges under the Palestinian ruling elite. For anarchists, such a process would be a significant step forward in a longer-term strategy for the destruction of the Israeli, Palestinian, and all other states along with capitalism, patriarchy and so on.

A fourth response would be to alter the terms of discussion altogether, by arguing that whether or not anarchists support a Palestinian state is an entirely insignificant matter, and thus constitutes what many activists would call a "false debate". What exactly are anarchists supposed to do with this support? If the debate is to resolve itself in a meaningful direction, then the ultimate question is whether anarchists can and should take action in support of a Palestinian state. But what could such action possibly be, short of petitions, demonstrations, and other elements of the "politics of demand" that anarchists seek to transcend? One can hardly establish a state through direct action, and the politicians who actually get to decide whether or not a Palestinian state is finally established aren't exactly asking anarchists their opinion. Seen in this light, debates about whether anarchists should give their short-term "support" to a Palestinian state sound increasingly ridiculous, since the only merit of such discussion would be to come up with a common platform. Thus, it can be argued, anarchists may take actions of solidarity with Palestinians (as well as Tibetan, West Papuan and Sahrawi people) without reference to the question of statehood. The everyday acts of resistance that anarchists join and defend in Palestine and Israel are immediate steps to help preserve people's livelihoods and dignity, which are in no way necessarily connected to a statist project. It is doubtful whether the Palestinians whom anarchists join in removing a roadblock, or in harvesting their olives while threatened by settlers, are doing so while consciously seeing it as a step towards statehood. The point is that, once viewed from a longer-term strategic perspective, anarchists' actions have worthwhile implications whether or not they are attached to a statist agenda of independence.

With this approach in mind, it would seem that the most fruitful avenue for further inquiry would be to analyse what anarchists and their allies are already doing on the ground. Then the key questions become: Which forms of involvement in the struggles in Palestine/Israel point most clearly towards *relevant* anarchist strategies and approaches?

Three Threads of Intervention

In looking at the landscape of struggle against the occupation, one should be aware that the anarchist presence on the ground is scarce and unevenly distributed. On a reasonable estimation, there are up to 300 people in Israel who are politically active and who wouldn't mind calling themselves anarchists — most of them Jewish women and men between the ages of 16–35.[2] Among Palestinians there are a few kindred souls and many allies, but no active anarchist movement. To

[2] Though not nominally anarchist, and lacking links to the vast Yiddish-speaking anarchist movement in Europe and America (Cohn 2005), a great many of the c.40,000 East European Jewish settlers in the second wave of emigration to Palestine (1904–1914) were committed to a libertarian and socialist ethos and way of life. This was expressed in the fully voluntarist, stateless communities that were the early kvutzot (predecessors of the kibbutz). Anarchist literature "was quite common" among kibbutz founders since before the first World War, specifically Kropotkin's ideas (Oved 2000). These were propagated among others by Joseph Trumpeldor, who identified as an "anarcho-communist and a Zionist". A self-professed anarchist, Aharon Shidlovsky, was one of the founders of kvutzat Kinneret. Aharon David Gordon, the "guru" of kvutzat Degania, objected to volunteering for the British army during WW1, did not mention a Jewish state even once in his dozens of articles, and anticipated contemporary eco-anarchist thinking in his anti-Marxist, anti-romantic critique of modernity (Gordon 1956). Anarchist trends proliferated in the *Hapoel HaTzair* ("The Young Labourer") movement, for whose magazine Gordon mostly wrote. The movement published Kropotkin in Hebrew and came into contact, through Martin Buber, with the ideas of Gustav Landauer. However, from the late twenties the period of movement and party institutionalization in Palestine buried these anarchist influences. As the central institutions of the Zionist state-in-waiting established their monopoly over the circulation of seed and produce, the *kibbutzim* lost their status as autonomous communes, and were later fully co-opted into the local

this is added the presence of some anarchists in international solidarity efforts on the ground, primarily though the Palestinian-led International Solidarity Movement (ISM). Despite their small numbers, however, anarchists and their immediate allies have had a great deal of impact. Here, three interwoven threads of intervention stand out, in which facet of anarchist politics emerge in a unique local environment.

Linking Issues

Perhaps the most obvious strength of the new anarchism, globally speaking, is its multi-issue platform, a conscious agenda of integrating diverse struggles. In genealogical terms, this platform derives from the rootedness of the contemporary movement in the intersection of different social struggles. In theoretical terms, this intersection is grounded in anarchists' stress on domination and hierarchy as the basis of multiple injustices. By creating networks that integrate the different movements and constituencies in which they are active, anarchists can facilitate recognition and mutual aid among struggles.

This strand is clearly present in the activities of anarchist and other radical movements in Israel/Palestine, where it comes into unique local configurations. As a result of their activity, more profound and aware connections are being made between the occupation, the widening social gap between rich and poor, the exploitation of foreign and domestic workers, the status of women, racism and ethnic discrimination, homophobia, pollution and consumerism.

One example of linking the struggle against the occupation to a different liberatory agenda is the activity of Kvisa Shchora (Black Laundry) — a direct action group of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders and others against the occupation and for social justice. It was created for the Pride Day parade in Tel-Aviv in 2001, a few months after the second Intifada began. Jamming the by-now depoliticised and commercialised celebration, about 250 radical queers in black joined the march under the banner "No Pride in the Occupation". Since then, the group has undertaken actions and outreach with a strongly anti-authoritarian orientation, which "stress the connection between different forms of oppression…The oppression of different minorities in the state of Israel feeds on the same racism, the same chauvinism, and the same militarism that uphold the oppression and occupation of the Palestinian people. There cannot be true freedom in an oppressive, occupying society. In a military society there is no place for the different and weak; lesbians, Gay men, drag queens, transsexuals, foreign workers, women, Mizrahi Israelis [of Middle Eastern or North African descent], Arabs, Palestinians, the poor, the disabled and others" (Black Laundry 2001). Kvisa Shchora's multi-issue politics places it in a dual role: on the one hand promoting solidarity with Palestinians, as well as anti-capitalism and antagonistic politics, in the mainstream LGBT community; and on the other hand stressing queer liberation in the movement against the occupation. According to one member, while many activists did not initially understand the significance of queers demonstrating as queers against the occupation, "after many actions and discussions our visibility is now accepted and welcome. This, I can't really say about our Palestinian partners, so in the territories we usually go back to the closet" (Ayalon 2004). The latter reality has also led Kvisa to engage in direct solidarity and support for Palestinian queers, who find even less acceptance in their society than Israeli queers do.

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capitalist economy (many of them are today privatised). There is thus no direct continuity between this precedent and contemporary Israeli anarchism.

Ma'avak Ehad (One Struggle) is an affinity group combining explicit anarchism and an animal liberation agenda, whose members are also very active in anti- occupation struggles. Again this combination of agendas is there with the explicit goal of "highlighting the connection between all different forms of oppression, and hence also of the various struggles against them" (One Struggle 2002). Ma'avak Ehad's explicit anti-capitalist and ecological agenda also adds a rare radical critique of the relationship between capitalism and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the latter is well researched on the economic level (Nitzan and Bichler 2002), awareness of these connections is far from widespread in public discourse, going only as far as political rhetoric like "money for social services, not for the settlements!". The group's emphasis on animal liberation again creates a critical bridge: calling attention to animal rights within peace and social justice movements, but also encouraging resistance to the occupation in the vegetarian and vegan community. Activities such as Food Not Bombs stalls, which create meaningful connections between poverty, militarism and animal exploitation, are highly poignant in an Israeli context. In addition, members of this group became the core of the direct-action group "Anarchists against the Wall" (see below).

A third example in this thread is New Profile, a feminist organization that challenges Israel's militarised social order. Its activities fall into two categories. First, it does educational work around the connections between militarism in Israeli society and patriarchy, inequalities and social violence, and acts to "disseminate and realize feminist-democratic principles in Israeli education by changing a system that promotes unquestioning obedience and glorification of military service" (Aviram 2003). Activities in this area include debates in schools that promote critical, non-hierarchical thinking and workshops on consensus, conflict resolution and democratic process for groups. In its second role, New Profile is the most radical among the four Israeli refusenik groups, and the one through which anarchists refusing military service predominantly organise. The group campaigns for the right to conscientious objection, and its website has full guides to refusal for both men and women. It operates a network of support "buddies" for refuseniks before, during and after jail, and arranges seminars for youth who are still dwelling on whether or not to refuse or evade service. Currently there is a campaigning drive to support and recognise the struggle of women refuseniks. The group's radical feminist/anti-militarist stance, besides being an important message to society, also creates a meaningful bridge between feminists and the refusenik movement. This bridge is also critical, since it challenges the core narratives to which most refuseniks — predominantly mainstream left-Zionist males — continue to adhere.

Non-violent Direct Action

A second thread of intervention in Palestine/Israel that is of particular interest to anarchists is civil disobedience and non-violent direct action, which enjoy an increasing presence in anti-occupation struggles. Such tactics are clearly central to the anarchist political repertoire, with their emphasis on unmediated action to change reality — be it to destroy and prevent or to create and enable — rather than appealing to an external agent to wield power on one's behalf. However, this thread is more knotted than the previous one, and requires some background.

The most prominent site of anarchist involvement in civil disobedience and direct action in Israel/Palestine is everyday support for Palestinian non-violent resistance. Such actions include anything from removing roadblocks and breaking curfews through obstructing bulldozers and squatting seized land and on to assisting and defending olive harvests against the military and

settlers. The central organ for these activities has been the Palestinian-led ISM, which largely became active before the height of the Israeli state's invasions and attacks on Palestinian population centres (Sandercock et.al 2004). Its first campaign, in August 2001, included forming human chains to block soldiers from interfering while Palestinians tore down military roadblocks, held mass demonstrations, or collectively broke curfews to go to school or harvest olives or play soccer. As the violence escalated, the ISM was driven to focus more and more on accompaniment and human-shielding while at the same time drawing world attention to the repression of Palestinians through the "live" presence of international witnesses. During the spring 2002 invasions, at a time where more proactive involvement would inevitably be suppressed with deadly force, ISM activists stayed in Palestinian homes facing demolition, rode with ambulances, escorted municipal workers to fix infrastructure, and delivered food and medicine to besieged communities. In what was perhaps the most widely-broadcast drama of this phase, internationals were holed-up for weeks days in the besieged Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem with residents, clergymen and armed militants. For a while, what internationals did was dictated by when, where, and how the Israeli army would attack. As the violence ebbed, however, the emphasis on defensive operations diminished (though continuing army incursions such as the one during which Rachel Corrie was killed in March 2003 still maintain the need for them). The ISM now turned proactive again, with demonstrations to break curfews and an international day of action in summer 2002, subsequent work in olive harvests, and, since the end of that year, actions around the Israeli "Separation Barrier" (cf. PENGON 2003). ISM organisers estimate that between a quarter and a third of volunteers have been Jewish.

Now while clearly the ISM and similar solidarity groups are not nominally anarchist, and include a large and divergent array of participants from a wide range of backgrounds, two clear connections to anarchism can nevertheless be made. First, in terms of the identity of participants, international solidarity activities in Palestine have seen a major and sustained presence of anarchists, who had earlier cut their teeth on anti-capitalist mobilisations and local grassroots organising in North America and Europe. Thus, these networks constitute the foremost vehicle for on-the-ground involvement of international anarchists in Palestine. Second, and more substantially, it may be argued that the main source of anarchist affinities with the ISM is that it prominently displays many of the hallmarks of anarchist political culture: the lack of formal membership, comprehensive "policy" and official leadership groups; a decentralised organising model based on autonomous affinity groups, spokescouncils and consensus decision-making; and a strategic focus on short-term campaigns and creative tactics that stress direct action and grassroots empowerment. These affinities are evinced by a statement from ISM Canada (ibid.) on the need to move "from an arrogant 'saviour' model of activism, to a real 'solidarity' model of activism". The emphasis on direct action contains many keywords of anarchist political language:

> Solidarity means more than "charity" work to ease our conscience. It must also do more than simply witness or document atrocities — though these tasks are also critical to our work. The ISM views solidarity as an imperative to actively engage in resistance to the Occupation, to take sides, to put our bodies on the line, and to use the relative privilege of our passports and, in some cases, colour — first and foremost, in ways that Palestinians actually request, but also in ways which help build trust and expand networks of mutual aid.

It should be emphasised, however, that these anarchist affinities are not the result of any direct influence on part of the Western anarchist movement. Rather, they are a point of convergence between anarchism and the endemic Palestinian tradition of popular resistance. Palestinians have a long-standing orientation towards civil disobedience and non-violent action, which have continued since the first Intifada — an uprising organised through popular committees and largely in detachment from the PLO leadership, involving massive demonstrations, general strikes, tax refusal, boycotts of Israeli products, political graffiti and the establishment of underground schools and grassroots mutual aid projects.

Hence, the first point to be made about the particulars of anarchist involvement in direct action in Palestine relates to its strong display of anti-vanguardism. In all of these actions, anarchists and their allies have deliberately participated as followers and supporters rather than equals. The ethos of the ISM and other solidarity groups stresses taking the lead from Palestinian community members or representatives, based on the principle that decision-making and control of actions should be in proportion to the degree to which one is affected by the potential outcome. As a result, ISMers have been careful to emphasise that "internationals cannot behave as if they are coming to teach Palestinians *anything* about 'peace' or 'non-violence' or 'morality' or 'democracy,' or anything else that many in the West typically (and arrogantly and mistakenly) view as the exclusive realm of Western activism and values" (ibid.). The same logic has been applied to the ideas of disobedience and direct action. In such a setting, any attempt at a *defining* contribution in terms of direct action — say, by way of implanting tactics garnered from Western models — would strike anarchists as an arrogant intervention. So in this case the anarchist connection happens more in terms of support for forms of popular resistance towards which anarchists experience an immediate affinity, rather than in terms of anarchists explicitly "introducing" their own politics into a new arena.

A second point regards the special intersection, in the current context, between direct action and questions of political violence. While recognising the legitimacy of organized, armed insurrection (though not of targeting civilians), the ISM itself participates only in already existing non-violent acts resistance by Palestinians. This has the goal of giving visibility to the non-violent aspects of Palestinian struggle, which in fact constitute the bulk their activity against the occupation, and with which Western audiences can more easily identify. Now this position provides an interesting counterpoint to the debates around violence in European and North American anarchist circles. As I mentioned in chapter 6, the rhetorical move towards a "diversity of tactics" places anarchists in a more comfortable position than strictly non-violent activists regarding the landscape of struggle in Palestine/Israel. Here, however, the non-violent aspect of direct action plays an entirely different role, since it takes place against the backdrop of a highly violent conflict, in which armed struggle is the norm rather than the exception (even the first Intifada, in addition to the non-violent means mentioned above, also involved stone throwing, Molotov cocktails and the erection of barricades to impede the movement of the Israeli army). By engaging only in non-violent forms of action while not denouncing armed resistance, the ISM has, after its own fashion, also adopted a diversity of tactics position. Where supporters of a more strict, ideological version of non-violence (e.g. in the Gandhian tradition) might experience a deep conflict with such a position, Western anarchists who have distanced themselves from strict non-violence can more comfortably accept it — although in this case it is they who take on the non-violent option. In Palestine, then, anarchists have found themselves inhabiting the other side of the "diversity of tactics" equation, counteracting the charge that this formulation is merely a euphemism for

violence (Lakey 2002) by showing that they too are committed to engage in purely non-violent actions under some conditions.

The development of such an agenda is an area in which the experiences of Israeli anarchists are especially important. Many Israelis have been engaged in Palestinian solidarity activities for decades, including in civil disobedience and non-violent direct action during the current *intifada*. The appearance of Israelis taking direct action along with Palestinians has, over time, destabilised the unquestioned legitimacy impacted the public sensibilities in Israel to a degree which international activists could never had managed. This is not so much due to the type of actions — which are essentially the same — as to the identity of the participants. Such actions taken by Israelis are far more transgressive and provocative in the eyes of the Israeli public, which is not accustomed to seeing its own citizens put their bodies on the line in support of Palestinian rights. Grassroots Palestinian leaders are interested in furthering such cooperation in order to influence public opinion in Israel, and more especially because the presence of Israelis, they hope, will moderate the reactions of the soldiers.

Two years into the new Intifada, some Israelis who were cooperating on direct action with ISM affinity groups and with other internationals increasingly felt the need to give more visibility to their own resistance as Israelis, by creating an autonomous group working together with Palestinians and internationals (Ayalon 2004). After a few actions against the Wall in Israel and Palestine, a small group started to come together and build a trusted reputation of Israeli direct-action activists willing to struggle together with local Palestinians against the Wall. In March 2003 the village of Mas'ha invited the group to build a protest tent on village land that was being confiscated for the Wall (98% of Mas'ha land was taken). The protest camp was created and became a centre of struggle and information against the planned construction in that area and in the whole West Bank. Over the four months of the camp more than a thousand internationals and Israelis came to learn about the situation and join the struggle. During the camp a direct-action group calling itself "Anarchists Against the Wall" (also known as "Jews Against Ghettos") was created. After the eviction of the Mas'ha camp in summer 2003 amid ninety arrests, the group continued to participate in many joint actions across the territories. "Members" of the group, with about one hundred active participants overall (Anonymous6 2004), were present at demonstrations and actions on a weekly basis in 2004, for example in Salem (July), Anin and Kafr Zeita (August) and Zabube (9 November). The latter action was taken on an international day of action against the Wall (also the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall). Some thirty Israeli anarchists joined the Palestinian villagers in tearing down about twenty meters of the new separation fence. In other actions, gates along the barrier have been broken through.

Ironically, these actions remained largely invisible to the Israeli public until the army escalated its tactics. On December 26, 2003 an Israeli anarchist demonstrating against the fence, Gil Na'amati, was shot in the thigh by Israeli soldiers at Mas'ha and sustained serious blood loss. At two subsequent events, an anarchist was shot very near the eye by a rubber-coated metal bullet, and another was thrown for a 50kph ride on the hood of an army jeep (Lavie 2004). The Israeli state's use of lethal violence against its own citizens made Israeli resistance to the Wall dramatically visible, and grew into a fierce debate about the army's use of deadly force against unarmed protesters. The commander of the soldiers who opened fire only fuelled the argument that raged in Israel's press yesterday by telling a local reporter: "The troops didn't know they were Israelis" — raising the issue of a perceived double standard on how the army deals with the Palestinians and its own citizens. Although the corporate media funnelled the debate into one

over the army's tactics, more space for public debate was opened up around the Wall, while the Israeli army's already well-shaken pretensions to be "the most moral army in the world" suffered another blow.

While the majority of the public certainly views Israeli anarchists as misguided, naive youth at best and as traitors at worst, it is impossible to deny that their direct actions have had an unprecedented impact on the discourse of wider Israeli society, especially around the Wall. Israeli-Palestinian cooperation in militant action is inherently transgressive because it enacts a dramatic, 90-degree flip of perspective (from horizontal to vertical). When both Palestinians and Israelis join in confronting the state, the horizontal imagery of national conflict is displaced by the vertical one of social struggle, "the people's side against the governments' side".

Grassroots Peace-making

This leads us to the third and possibly most important thread of intervention, European and North American anarchists have long been aware of the need to complement destructive/preventative direct action with constructive/enabling forms of the same. However, the context in which the latter are discussed and used has been predominantly social and economic, with examples ranging from squats and social centres through urban food-gardening and self-help groups and on to cooperatives and LETS systems. The unique situation in Israel/Palestine allows us to glimpse the further potentialities of this logic in a setting of "national conflict". Here, a third thread of anarchist intervention may be spoken of, whereby the direct action logic on its constructive mode is extended towards projects of grassroots peacemaking.

Israeli citizens cannot legally enter the West Bank or Gaza. Citizens of the West Bank and Gaza cannot legally enter Israel. The only Israelis that many Palestinians get to see are the army. The only Palestinians that many Israelis get to see are on TV. This reality obviously fosters mutual ignorance, fear and hatred on both sides. Paradoxically, however, for most Jewish Israelis, the notion of peace is strongly associated with the notion of separation. Ehud Barak's central slogan in his 1999 election campaign was "physical separation from the Palestinians — us here, them there". Thus the refusal to reinforce separation works against the grain of mainstream discourse. It should be appreciated that the Israeli government's name for the barrier, the "separation" fence or wall, signifies something *positive* for many Israelis. Most of the Israeli "peace camp" has a problem with the wall, but would be satisfied if its route were to overlap perfectly with the Green Line, say, as a border between two states. Possibly many Palestinians would agree. However, this idea too needs to be challenged by anarchists and others who support a genuine peace in the region. This is because conditions of physical separation cannot make for the true reconciliation that is required by a more thoroughgoing notion of peace. The latter would go beyond a "permanent armistice" and signify the full normalisation of relations between Palestinians and Israelis, where coexistence is a relationship bereft of all fear, suspicion and distance.

Many grassroots peacemaking efforts are oriented in this direction. One example is the organisation Ta'ayush (Arab-Jewish Partnership), created after the beginning of the 2nd Intifada. That month was one of the only cases when Palestinians who live in Israel actively resisted and raised their voices in solidarity with those in the occupied territories. Ta'ayush has a large membership of Jews and Palestinian Arabs of Israeli citizenship, including many students, and undertakes many actions in the territories — bringing food to the towns and helping farmers to work their land. A more communal example is Neve Shalom / Wahat al-Salaam, a cooperative village of Jew-

ish and Palestinian Israelis, situated equidistant between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Founded in 1972, the village now houses about 50 families and operates Israel's first fully bilingual regional school, with 290 Jewish and Arab children. The residents also have been organizing projects to help Palestinians in the West Bank with distribution of food and medical attention. Overall, the network of organisations for Jewish-Arab coexistence in Israel already lists over one hundred groups, from lobbying and advocacy groups through educational and artistic projects and on to local citizens' fora in mixed cities and regions. However, unlike Ta'ayush, many of these initiatives explicitly designate themselves as "a-political", sidestepping the obligation to confront social inequalities in Palestine/Israel, seeing themselves as "civil society" initiatives which supplement rather than challenge basic political and social structures.

A specific anarchist contribution to this thread of intervention, then, is to infuse it with a more clearly antagonistic dimension. What anarchists especially contribute to grassroots peacemaking is to undertake projects within its fold, on their own or in cooperation with others, while maintaining a stance of refusal towards state power. Thus community peacemaking, as a form of politician-bypassing direct action, at least has the potential for generating further joint struggles and a deeper awareness of how collective oppression and trauma are at work on both sides.

In a highly-evocative article, Bill Templer (2003) points to one version of what this could look like, using many keywords that will be well familiar by now:

> Reinventing politics in Israel and Palestine means laying the groundwork now for a kind of Jewish-Palestinian Zapatismo, a grassroots effort to "reclaim the commons". This would mean moving towards direct democracy, a participatory economy and a genuine autonomy for the people; towards Martin Buber's vision of "an organic commonwealth…that is a community of communities" (1958: 136). We might call it the "no-state solution".

Templer's optimism for such a project rests on the perception of a widespread crisis of faith in "neoliberal governmentality", making Israel/Palestine "a microcosm of the pervasive vacuity of our received political imaginaries and the ruling elites that administer them…[but which] offers a unique microlaboratory for experimenting with another kind of polity". While acknowledging the inevitability of a two-state settlement in the short term, he traces elements which are already turning Palestine/Israel into "an incubator for creating 'dual power' over the middle term, 'hollowing out' capitalist structures and top-down bureaucracies". Templer's speculations on a "staged transformation", a kind of two states — one state — no states transition, are perhaps going a bit too far. As far as longer-term transitions go, anarchists might prefer to do without the one-statist transition period, envisioning the decomposition of all East Meditteranean states and capitalisms into networks of autonomous communities ("organic" or otherwise).

The point, however, is the grassroots grounding of the process itself. Realistically speaking, then, we are looking to the activities of groups and communities that can contaminate the two-statist peace process with a more thoroughgoing agenda of social transformation. What grounds such an agenda, from an anarchist perspective, is the argument that the creation of genuine peace requires the creation and fostering of political spaces which facilitate voluntary cooperation and mutual aid between Israelis and Palestinians. This holds even in the face of the resistance of the Israeli government, and beyond any "agreement" brokered by political rackets. Indeed, even if the Israeli government suddenly allowed for peace and normalisation between the two peoples,

such peace and normalisation would still only exist to the extent that people practised it; it would not spring into being by executive fiat.

The Mas'ha camp has already registered a powerful example of the potentials of such endeavours. The encounter between Israelis and Palestinians engaging in a joint struggle against the construction of the Wall in the village became a protracted face to face encounter, where members of both communities were able to work together on a day-to-day basis, overcoming the invisible walls of isolation and stereotypes created by the occupation. For both sides, the camp was an intense experience of equality and togetherness, which by extension could create a model for future efforts (Shalabi and Medicks 2003):

> *Nazeeh:* We wanted to show that the Israeli people are not our enemies; to provide an opportunity for Israelis to cooperate with us as good neighbors and support our struggle…Our camp showed that peace will not be built by walls and separation, but by cooperation and communication between the two peoples living in this land. At Mas'ha Camp we lived together, ate together, and talked together 24 hours a day for four months. Our fear was never from each other, but only from the Israeli soldiers and settlers.
>
> *Oren:* The young Israeli generation realizes that the world has changed. They saw the Berlin wall come down. They know that security behind walls is illusionary. Spending some time together in the camp, has proven to us all that real security lies in the acceptance of one another as equals, in respecting each other's right to live a full, free life…[we struggle] to topple walls and barriers between peoples and nations, creating a world which speaks one language — the language of equal rights and freedom.

The imagery of resistance to fences, walls and borders already has a very strong currency in anarchist and broader anti-capitalist circles. The fences erected around summits, immigrant detention centres, affluent suburbs and prisons — all have been used as symbols for broader social processes such as border regimes, the enclosure of commons, restrictions on freedom of movement, the "democratic deficit" in global institutions and the stifling of dissent (Klein 2002). Meanwhile, a series of No Border protest-camps have been taking place in Europe and the U.S.-Mexico Border, under the slogan "No Human is Illegal" — and expressing an explicit rejection not only of immigration controls, but of all border regimes as such (hence, by way of veiled implication, of the state). In such a discursive environment, the Separation Wall was just asking for it. The challenge, however, is to extend this logic to the multiple fences — real and political — that segregate the Israeli and Palestinian communities on the level of everyday life.

At the crossroads of imperial conflict since Egypt and Assyria, and with a central place in the cultural legacies of the three Abrahamic religions, the land between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean continues to be an important "acupuncture point" in the spectacle of geopolitics. Just as the reception of the Oslo agreements was emblematic of the "optimistic" attitude to globalisation of the 90s, so its collapse into renewed violence parallels the latter's transformation into a barefaced permanent global war. The Clash of Civilisations ideology, touted in support of this war, continues to feeds off the situation west of the Jordan and is thus vulnerable to a large scale proliferation of radical peacemaking. This may sound like fantasy, but the degree to which the discourse around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been radicalised in recent years should not

be underestimated. The success of these movements may mean that the coming peace agreement may not generate quietude, but a flood of co-operating, disobedient publics — a bi-, multi- or post-national "community of communities" which struggles to realise itself.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored the rise of contemporary anarchism in recent years, analysed it as a social movement, and made theoretical interventions in some of the central dilemmas and areas of controversy that preoccupy activists in the present day. It has argued for a primary understanding of anarchism as a political culture, traced the movement's recent genealogy, and discussed the keywords of anarchist political language. The participatory research methods adopted in this thesis have proven invaluable in yielding a meaningful framework of explanation that would not have been available without the intimate connection with the life-world of activists[1]. In discussing questions of power, violence, technology and nationalism, this thesis has attempted to display what anarchist theory can look like, once it resolves to remain in close critical engagement with contemporary anarchist literature and oral debate, while at the same time bringing into play the conceptual tools of political theory, as well as academic discussions and arguments which, while unfamiliar to anarchists, afford key insights into the very debates in which they constantly engage.

There are two main messages that this thesis would drive home to academic audiences. The first and most obvious one is that contemporary anarchism is to be taken extremely seriously, by social scientists and political theorists alike. The re-convergence of anarchist politics has given rise to what is arguably the largest and most coherent, vibrant and rapidly-evolving revolutionary movement in advanced capitalist countries.

As such, it deserves close attention from researchers who wish to unlock processes of political expression, agenda setting, identity formation and ideological development in social movements, as well as from socially-minded political theorists who want to relate their conceptual endeavours to a broader and more integrated array of social criticism and proposals for change. As indicated in particular by the discussions of power, violence and technology, some radical academic philosophers are displaying orientations which are surprisingly harmonious with anarchism. An examination of the possible connection between specific theoretical agendas and the anarchist political project may provide meaningful insights and a platform for multi-issue thinking.

The second message, more specifically directed at socially-minded political theorists, is to encourage an unapologetic attitude to one's social agendas as a philosopher, and a strong connection between prescriptive enterprises and the investigative engagement with the needs of social movements. While there are fairly radical implications in much of recent political theory, especially in its egalitarian and democratic veins, such work still remains highly ambiguous about its own claim to relevance and possible contribution to social change. What is often assumed is that academic philosophical thinking is inevitably confined to the ivory tower and can have, at best, an accidental influence on society through its subliminal percolation into the thinking of

[1] It should be noted that web-based search engines such as Google have proved to be entirely unreliable in their representation of the relative importance of anarchist nodes on the web. The first four points of call I would recommend for further research on anarchism are indymedia.org, infoshop.org, agp.org and slash.autonomedia.org. A recommended search-engine is www.activista.org

policy-makers. A more militant approach to political theory would shift the intended audience to social movement participants, emphasise the social role of the philosopher as a facilitator for their thinking, and strongly encourage an appreciation of political culture in order to make theoretical interventions relevant to the activity of those who are taking a stand for social transformation.

In proposing avenues for further research, two topics immediately suggest themselves. The first and more narrow one is the relationship between the anarchist and animal liberation movements and agendas, particularly in Britain and the U.S. While cross-participation in the two movements remains very small, possibly due to different class backgrounds, they also clearly have shared attributes (a confrontational stance, use of direct action, extreme decentralisation, roots in the punk subculture). More recently, animal liberation groups such as SHAC have begun to target the corporate infrastructure of animal testing. While remaining a tactical choice, this also implies a deeper analysis of the connection between animal exploitation and other forms of domination — a direction explored in writing, with increasing intensity, in recent years (Dominick 1995, Anonymous9 1999, homefries 2004). Recent trends in state repression, including the narrowing of demonstration rights and legislation against economic sabotage, are beginning to generate meaningful solidarity and cooperation between the two movements. Additionally, individual activists from the animal rights movement have recently been making deliberate contacts with anarchists, a process which is beginning to create interesting cross-fertilisations that merit further study.

A second, broader topic for future research is the economic aspects of contemporary anarchism. This is not about abstract modelling or arguments between mutualist, communist, syndicalist or even free-market anarchisms — historical configurations that do not correspond to any divisions in the contemporary movement. Rather, and in line with the methodology suggested in this thesis, a discussion of the economic aspects of anarchism could do three things. First, it could draw on the concrete experience of anarchist networks in their alternative-building capacity, in order to construct a working understanding of anarchist economic culture. This would investigate the orientations towards production, exchange and labour management with which anarchists are experimenting in their ongoing activities, from the collective economic behaviour of existing urban and rural anarchist communities to the circulation of goods and money in direct action networks. Since it inevitably operates within and as-against an overall capitalist environment, anarchist economic behaviour could also be studied with the aim of explaining dual-power strategies more broadly, especially regarding the processes of mutual contamination between dominant and antagonistic socio-economic realities. Second, it could point to new anarchist critiques of capitalism and work, particularly those focused on precarious and flexitime labour (Foti and Romano 2004, Mitropoulos et.al. 2005) and on the elaboration of zero-work agendas (Zerowork Collective 1975, Black 1986, Brown 1995). Third, it could draw attention to theoretical resources outside the anarchist movement, especially in contemporary critical Marxism, which anarchists would benefit from "pirating" into their own frame of thinking (Postone 1993, Holloway 2002, Nitzan and Bichler 2005).

As the anarchist movement re-awakens into the twenty first century, revolutionary politics faces many more questions than answers. The shifting landscape of social struggle, economic and environmental instability, and a volatile global geopolitics, all promise to keep anarchists on their feet for years to come, and to introduce many further re-configurations in their political repertoires and theories. Nevertheless, a certain level of stability and clarity seems to have been reached in the movement's overall agendas for social change. A combination of efforts to

erode the legitimacy of the system, construction of grassroots alternatives, and solidaristic networking and cooperation between autonomous struggles, is by now a broadly shared strategical perspective among anarchists and their allies.

The recent years have also seen the credibility of arguments for "good government" wearing increasingly thin. Participation in elections continues to fall around the world, large publics see their manifest demands being ignored (consider the protests against war in Iraq), and the collusion between political and corporate interests is a matter of common knowledge. Under these conditions, the argument for "no government" may finally receive a fair hearing. Anarchism has not yet had its final word.

Oxford, 2000–2005

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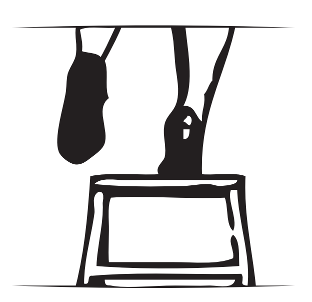
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